

BROTHER JOHN'S
CANAAN
IN
CAROLINA

W. WYAN WASHBURN, M. D.

KY.

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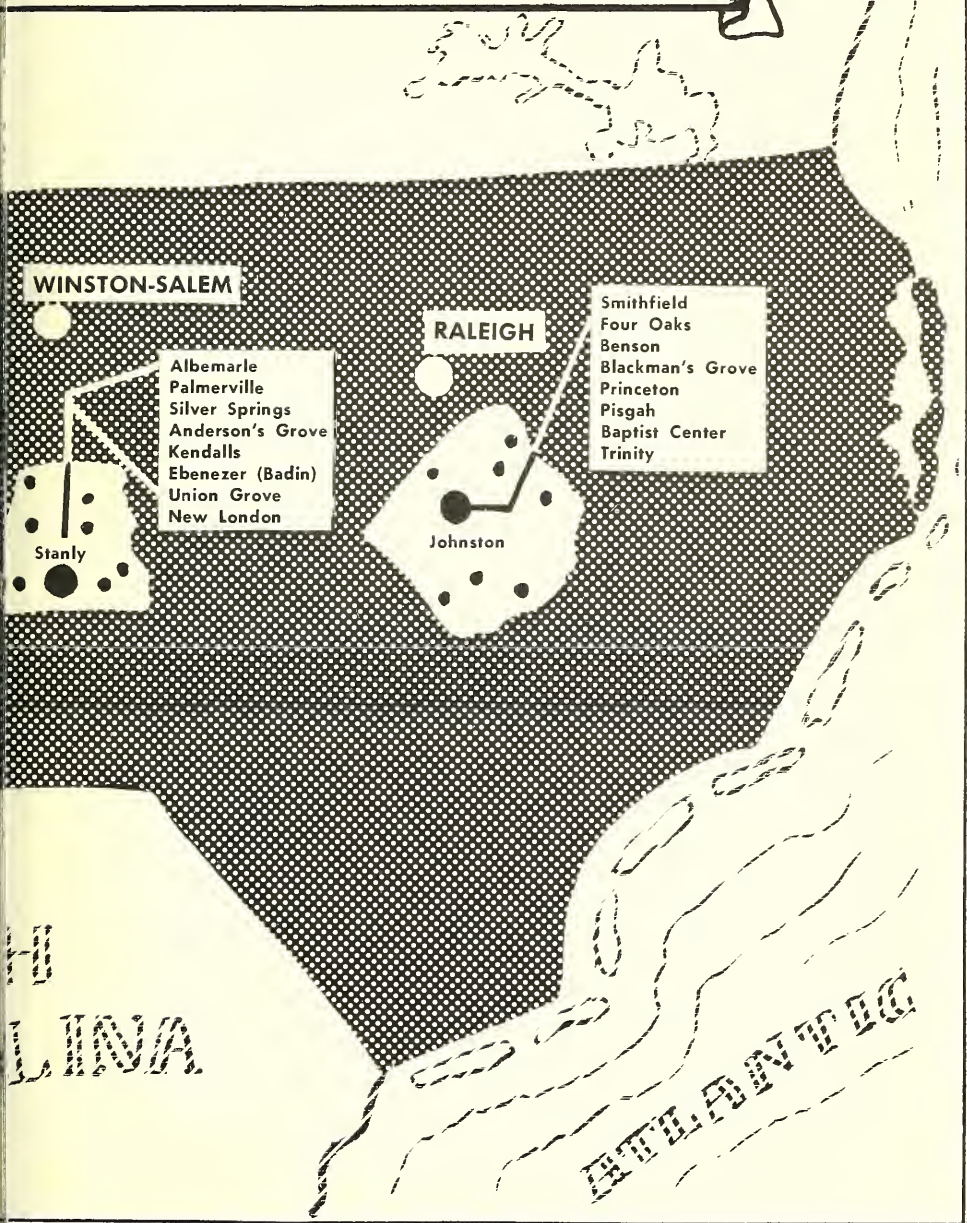
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BROTHER JOHN'S

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CANAAN

IN

CAROLINA

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Dedicated
To My Father
Joseph Chauncy Washburn
And My Mother
Estilla McSwain Washburn
Whose families were neighbors to the Suttles
For more than a hundred years
And whose love and interest inspired me
To write this book.

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Foreword

There is no denying that this book should have been written. It should have been written long ago. It should have been done by someone other than me.

I am a physician, not a writer. My daily task is to examine, diagnose, and prescribe. But like Dr. Luke of long ago—a more honorable and more capable physician and writer—I have a story to tell. How I shall tell it remains to be seen.

In a way, my story is a continuation of Luke's story nearly 2,000 years later. It is about a man who truly has been one of Jesus' most trusted disciples, who traveled more miles than the traveling Apostle Paul and preached more sermons than the Pentecostal Peter, and who has directed souls into the Kingdom for almost as many years as did the Beloved Apostle John.

The saga, the story, the miracle, and the amazing accomplishments of John William Suttle in 37 churches can never happen again. Many there are who will doubt they ever happened at all.

They will never happen again. First, because there will never be another John Suttle; and second, because the nation, the South, the Southern Baptist Convention, the State of North Carolina, and the Kings Mountain Baptist Association will never be the same again.

Dr. R. C. Campbell, a native Tar Heel, alumnus of Gardner-Webb College, Vice-President of the Southern Baptist Convention, and one of the truly great ministers and writers of this generation, said of Mr. Suttle: "When true greatness is remembered, none ranks higher than John W. Suttle. Others have gone away and attained greatness. He has attained fame at home.

"This man is small in stature, unique in influence and service, and unforgettable as a personality. He is more than an ordinary man, because it takes more than an ordinary man to preach the gospel 65 years, to be the mod-

erator of his own Association for forty years, and to be elected by popular vote to the office of the presidency of the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina.

"He has the qualities of true greatness; he wears his heart on the outside. He has an unalloyed soul. People throughout have followed him instinctively, he is a man—a man's man, and a natural-born leader. He has the happy faculty of being at home with both the high and the low, the rich and the poor, the educated and the uneducated. He speaks his convictions, but has the humility of a child. He speaks with ready wit, direct approach, sound philosophy, convincing logic, poignant truths, apt illustrations, and practical application.

"Think of the service he has rendered, the sermons and addresses he has made, the funerals he has conducted, the marriages at which he has officiated, the sorrowing he has comforted, the lives he has inspired, the hope and confidence he has instilled, the souls he has won and the thousands of tasks he has done in a simple manner. He has exultant joy in those who have gone out from his churches to preach, to be missionaries, and to be Christian leaders in all parts of the world. Through these, his influence encircles the earth.

"Here indeed is true service and genuine greatness."

He is truly the epitome of the era, the acme of the age of transition of Baptist Churches from nineteenth to twentieth century methods.

To simply record the story of such a man is a tremendous task. To interpret his long life and its contribution to the Baptist Denomination and the Christian faith is a task impossible. To me it has been a labor of love.

W. WYAN WASHBURN, M.D.

March, 1958

Boiling Springs, N. C.

Introduction

The subject of this book—John William Suttle, age 86—has linked together four distinct eras throughout his life and the course of his 65 year ministry as a “country preacher”.

1872-1882—Ten years of boyhood were spent in the poverty stricken confusion of post Civil War reconstruction with the social and religious upheaval which attended that era.

1882-1917—For 35 years while he was maturing, he observed the forces of empire building in the North, the West, and the South, and saw a gradual decline in the Victorian elements of life up to the eve of World War I.

1917-1945—For 28 years after World War I, he observed recession, prosperity, depression, expansion and the world-wide conflict known as World War II.

1945-1956—The last war ushered in the Atomic Age which was ten years old at his retirement. All aspects of life have been quickened to the tempo of the jet propelled airplane and the explosion of uranium and hydrogen bombs.

As a child, bathed and fed by former slaves, he later became the pastor and a member of churches where certain Negroes were welcomed members. He then passed through a half century of complete segregation of white and colored races in the churches of North Carolina to a time when the Supreme Court said separation is unlawful, at least in the public schools and on public buses.

No integrationist or segregationist *per se*, Brother John says, “Give us enough time and the Lord will help us to work out our problems of race in building the Kingdom of God.”

Baptists had been a separate and distinct group in Eng-

land and in America two hundred years before John was born. They were known as General Baptists and held general councils or assemblies consisting of bishops, elders and brethren. Missionary Baptists claim to be the main stem of these General Baptists and have multiplied to such proportions that present membership is far greater than all other Baptist groups combined.

The North Carolina Baptist State Convention was organized in 1830, and as pioneers pushed to the West, new churches and new associations were formed. The Southern Baptist Convention was organized in 1845 and extended its program of Home Missions over the South and the settled communities of the West.

Among the bigger Baptist names on the tongues of people in this section when Brother John was born were the names of Samuel Wait, first field worker for the North Carolina Convention and first president of Wake Forest College; Thomas Meredith, early Convention leader; W. M. Wingate and T. H. Pritchard of Wake Forest; Richard Furman, founder of Furman University; and Luther Rice and Morgan Edwards of the Northern Baptist Convention.

In the few years after the Civil War not only Baptists but all Southerners were prostrate, divided, poor, needy, suffering; and yet, were patient, cheerful and ready to labor. Foreign Missions began after the war, in 1870, first to Brazil and then to Italy.

In 1898, Brother John had been preaching eight years, was himself a State Missionary, and had two children when the various Baptist bodies in North Carolina were consolidated with the then sixty-eight-year-old Baptist State Convention.

Prior to that time North Carolina was considered a part of the Mission Field of the American Baptist Mission Society, whose headquarters was in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

Dr. Isaac Taylor Tichenor, the first Secretary of the Home Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention, was one of the first men Brother John met at some of the

early meetings of that board.

Although the Baptist Sunday School Board, as we know it now, is younger than John's ministry, it is also true that there had been a publication society in Charleston, South Carolina, and in 1851 a Bible Board in Nashville, Tennessee. These groups prepared and printed for the Convention the widely circulated "Kind Words" series.

Intense rivalry was the order of the day in the late 90's between Southern and Northern Baptists, especially between the new Sunday School Board and the American Baptist Publication Society. During and after the Civil War, the North had been permitted to publish virtually all religious literature used by Baptists in the South until after the organization of the Sunday School Board.

It was many years before Brother John was able to get Southern literature used in all his churches.

On April 1, 1896, the Sunday School Board reviewed a proposition by the Northerners to publish even more literature, but to share the profits with the South. Dr. Tichenor wrote, "We cannot accept your proposition, deeming such an alliance neither desirable nor feasible. We have no thought whatever in surrendering the work entrusted to us by the Southern Baptist Convention. Under the blessings of God our work has had in these five years a success almost phenomenal and altogether without precedent in Baptist circles. . . ."

At the time John decided to be a Baptist preacher he could have been one of four different and distinct types:

A Campbellite, whose founder, Alexander Campbell, wanted to build the church on historicity and apostolicity.

A Landmarker, whose proponents formulated and gave momentum to a Baptist type of High-Churchism. The leading champion of Landmarkism was J. R. Graves of Tennessee.

A Hardshell, or Anti-mission Baptist, whose chief proponents were Daniel Parker and John Taylor.

A Missionary Baptist, or the main branch of Arminian Baptists whose standard bearers had been Roger Williams

and Luther Rice, who proved they believed in missions by becoming missionaries.

John chose the role of Missionary Baptist minister, and time has proved he made the right decision.

The following table shows the phenomenal growth and progress of Missionary Baptists both in North Carolina and within the bounds of the Southern Baptist Convention from 1890 to the year after John ended his ministry.

	1890		1955	
	N. C.	S. B. C.	N. C.	S. B. C.
Churches	1,419	16,091	3,191	29,899
Members	135,724	1,235,908	807,667	8,169,491
Baptisms	8,471	81,806	35,607	396,857
Local	\$200,362.24	\$2,478,011.00	\$28,481,780.00	\$252,647,947.00
Total	243,354.00	2,876,927.00	33,751,927.00	305,573,654.00
Gifts, Mission	42,991.76	398,916.00	5,270,147.00	52,926,157.00
Total				
Gifts per capita	1.79	2.33	41.79	37.40
Local				
Gifts per capita	1.45	2.00	35.26	30.92
Mission				
Gifts per capita	.32	.32	6.53	6.48

Social upheavals have attended this upsurge and expansion of the Baptist faith.

The United States has been involved in the War with Spain, two World Wars, and several uprisings and police actions since John became a minister.

Prohibition of the use of alcohol has had its ups and downs, ins and outs in the nation.

Living through 22 presidential elections, Brother John has seen the fortunes of the Democrats and Republicans wax and wane at the national polls and has voted in all those elections since he was 21.

He has seen the national debt rise from a few million to upwards of three hundred billion dollars, with tremendous sums of state, municipal, and private debts contracted in addition.

Baptists have been subjected to the pressures of encroachment by social planners and champions of the welfare state.

Life has become almost too complicated to imagine.

Through this revolution and these great changes, this one man, whom we shall know in this book as Brother John, watched from the sidelines, marched with the warriors in battle, preached to thousands from the pulpit, and shouted from the mountaintop that "Christ is the Answer"; that the narrow Way of the Cross is the only way to peace and security and the only hope for Eternal Salvation.

His life has been a journey, a pilgrimage to the Promised Land. Through the "wilderness", leading his people, he has come. He now stands "On Jordan's Stormy Banks" where he can clearly see the wide, extended plains of a Christian minister's Canaan . . . in Carolina.

Acknowledgements

I am deeply indebted to many people for assistance in gathering material for this book, to others for helping shape and write it.

First, to Brother John for patiently going over his life a chapter at a time, spelling out the details as well as noting the landmarks; and to Mrs. Suttle, without whose scrapbooks and mementos, writing the book would have been impossible.

To all pastors of the Kings Mountain and Sandy Run Baptist Associations; to all of Suttle's "Sons in the Ministry", to the late Dr. R. C. Campbell for correspondence and evaluation; to Dr. E. B. Lattimore, Suttle's family physician for half a century; to Mrs. Lula Shaver, the Reverend J. Boyce Brooks and the Reverend L. D. Munn of Stanly County; to Mrs. Robert Barbour, Honorable R. E. Batton and the Reverend Larry Mayo of Smithfield, N. C.; to J. Bryan Creech of Four Oaks, N. C.; to Clarence Griffin of Forest City, N. C.; to Dr. G. W. Paschal of Wake Forest, N. C.; to Dr. W. W. Barnes of Fort Worth, Texas, for historical references; to the late John R. Logan for information concerning Baptists in Piedmont North Carolina prior to 1880; to Tim Hord and Hubert Carlisle for assistance with photography.

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Most especially to Mrs. Othello Cabe Traywick, my secretary, typist and researcher, who spent more time than anyone else sifting the events of 85 years to bring out the salient facts in the life of Brother John Suttle.

And to my wife, Emily, for great forbearance and understanding of this task.



Age 13
Redheaded and Mischievous

I

How To Rob A Crow's Nest

"GOOD MORNING TO YOU"

When I was a child, I spake as a child.

I Corinthians 13:11a

"How old are you, son?"

Little John Suttle who looked even younger than his tender eight years, replied almost in a whisper, "I'm eight."

The time was the summer of 1880; the place, Beaver Dam Baptist Church five miles west of Shelby, North Carolina.

It was a good meeting. Brother J. M. Bridges, "Big Mun" (for Monroe) he was called, was doing the preaching and there had been many conversions. Now the time had come to receive them into the church.

All were on the front seat and 56 of the 57 had been received. Apparently on purpose, the rough-handed, deep-voiced country preacher had skipped John and left him until the very last.

"Do I hear a motion to receive this child?"

There was a deathly silence.

After more questions and more silence, Brother Neely

Green said, "I make a motion he be received." More silence. Then a hesitant second by a close relative and the youngest member ever taken at Beaver Dam was looking forward to his baptism.

Thus John William Suttle, the child, became John the Baptist; later, "Reverend" J. W. Suttle. He is widely known as "Hoppin'" John for his well known limp; or "The Little Preacher" because he weighs less than a hundred pounds; "Parson" Suttle by his colored friends; and simply "John" by his wife.

After nearly four score years of being a Christian, 65 of which were spent in the ministry as pastor of 37 rural churches in North and South Carolina, his thousands of friends, associates and acquaintances know him affectionately as "Brother John".

By birth and later by choice, Brother John has always been associated with country people, country ways, and country conditions. The people of Cleveland and Rutherford counties three-quarters of a century ago were not simply uneducated, unlearned, and unintelligent country hicks. Instead, they were poor, uneducated, but highly intelligent rural people who learned quickly, who knew how to make a living, and who were endowed with an unusual amount of common sense. One definition of common sense is "uncommonly good sense".

Most of the residents of this section were descendants of hardy pioneer stock; namely of English, Scotch-Irish, and German ancestry. They were not born to the manor as were their South Carolina neighbors from Charleston; nor were they the landed gentry from the eastern North Carolina plains. Most of them came to this section around the middle of the eighteenth century. Many of them were a part of the general migration from the area of Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, being first and second generation Americans.

While Daniel Boone's father and friends were settling on the Yadkin River, the Suttles, Hamricks, McSwains,

Washburns, Greens, Blantons, and other pioneer families were hacking roads through the wilderness of the Piedmont. They then built their cabins in the center of a clearing and set out to rear their families. None of them were wealthy; in fact, most of them were poor but willing and able to work—fiercely independent, loyal and faithful, Baptist, Methodist and Presbyterian, staunchly good citizens.

Life was simple but hard. The main crops were corn and wheat, both being used as food for the pioneer family and feed for the animals around the farm. A small garden provided vegetables in season and many fruits and wild berries were gathered from the nearby woods.

Corn bread and "hoe cake", along with salt pork, dried beef, dried fruits and vegetables were the main ingredients of the diet. Only coffee, matches, and occasionally sugar were brought from the outside. The early settlers raised their own tobacco and sheared their sheep for wool to make their simple clothes. They made shoes from the hides of animals slaughtered for meat. In fact, they lived at home in such a simple fashion, with such independence, with such skill at improvising, that the economy of the rest of the country seldom affected the pattern.

By the time John was born and during his early manhood, cotton had come to replace tobacco as the money crop. There were only two cotton gins in Cleveland County in those days, but they were crude affairs and most cotton seeds were being extracted by the old-fashioned simple method of picking out the seed by hand. A later method, invented by Eli Whitney, sawed the seeds out of the lint.

Both cotton and wool were carded and spun into thread, which in turn was made into cloth on old-fashioned looms. All of these operations were crude, very slow, and done by hand. Simple dyes made from the bark of trees, butter-nuts, walnut hulls, elderberries, or washed from the various clay formations, added a little color to the drabness of handmade garments. In addition to cotton and grains,

sorghum was one of the staple foods. From this plant the early settler made molasses. Molasses was made by crushing the sorghum cane, extracting the juice, then by use of a large kettle or a broad pan, boiling the juice for several hours to produce a succulent syrup. This "sweetening" took the place of sugar and was used to sweeten coffee and preparations of milk; that was all the housewife had to sweeten her cake.

A large flat sweet cake made from molasses, flour, and occasionally a little ginger, was known as a "hasty-dog". Why that name I do not know. Perhaps it was because if ever any was left over, the pioneer's old hound dogs would come for it quicker than they would for a cake of corn bread.

Roads were merely rutted trails up and down the hills from one place to another. There were two main roads in Cleveland County. One ran through the county by way of Shelby to Rutherfordton going from east to west. The other was a north-south road known as the "post road", passing in the vicinity of the Elizabeth Community just east of Shelby. Over this road couriers carried the mail from Morganton to York, South Carolina, and on to Charleston. Travel was either by carriage, wagon, horseback or foot.

In the winter even the best roads became quagmires and came to be well nigh impassable. There were no public schools, but occasionally a man or woman of some education would hold a subscription school from two to three months during the year. Parents would pay a small sum to the teacher to teach his child for these few weeks. School houses were log cabins, rough and crude and poorly heated. The lighting was poor with no windows at all, or occasionally an open window across which a piece of oiled paper was stretched to let in some light. Benches were rough and usually were of handsawed boards held up by legs stuck at angles in auger holes.

Very little furniture adorned the room, and it was made by hand. Boys and girls carried their slates and slate pen-

cils and a small lunch box. In the lunch box were portions of the simple fare that the family had at home. There was probably a biscuit with a piece of meat or baked potato or some home-grown fruit. A great many youngsters took only two or three large size biscuits and a little bottle of molasses. They would punch a hole in the biscuit with their finger then pour the hole full of molasses and enjoy their lunch.

Homework and reading had to be done mostly in daylight since in John's early boyhood lighting was very poor. Kerosene lamps were just beginning to be used and the carbide and electric lights were still in the future.

Much of the instruction was done at home with mothers and fathers imparting whatever education they had to the children. There were very few schools of higher learning; that is, schools beyond the grammar grades. These were called academies and were often a combination of military and prep school. In a county where now we have fourteen high schools and a junior college, in Mr. Suttle's boyhood there was only one such military and prep school, operated by Captain W. T. R. Bell. He was a former officer in the Civil War and was very strict in carrying out the discipline he thought necessary to education.

Sometimes the Board of Education was a heavy pine board which, when applied to the right portion of the anatomy, both stimulated education and brought the desired discipline.

There was little social life for the youngsters in John's family aside from the family gathering, going to church, and occasionally making the long wagon trip to see their Rutherford County kin folks. In the fall and winter, however, there was little travel and only an occasional corn shucking or molasses pulling for the younger folk. His family did not encourage attendance at the barn dances or some of the more worldly forms of entertainment.

Young John was accustomed to hearing many of the tales of the old Civil War veterans including his father, his uncles, and a number of the county's most prominent

citizens. Some had returned safe and sound while others came back minus a leg or an arm or a lung, and all had experiences which could thrill any young boy. Not only was John given stories of the war, but he was regaled with numerous legends concerning Indians, pioneers, trappers, mountain men of the West, Ku Kluxers, and bad men of every sort.

Farmers, slaves, and servants of his own household kept him fully informed about the ghosts and spirits which inhabited the area. Signs and superstitions were much more common in his youth than now; perhaps because the general educational level was quite low.

In spite of the tales and superstitions, the Suttle family dwelt in a sense of reasonable security. Father Suttle always owned his own land, lived in a fairly substantial house, had a little better than average income, and was related to the county's best families. From his front porch, John could see to the north and west the towering peaks of the Blue Ridge and even closer the Casar and the South Mountains. To know that these mountains always were there and were the fountain sources of the streams which came through Cleveland County, added no little portion to a sense of security.

John's first experience at school was in the Sharon Community. In those days education was very limited. He and his brothers and sisters were taught in a little school house which Father Suttle had built on the farm. Neighboring children also attended the school which was conducted by a teacher who lived in the Suttle home. Hours were from eight to four and the term usually lasted four months. His earliest teacher was Miss Sallie Webb, aunt of Miss Selma Webb who taught school in Cleveland County for over fifty years. She later became the mother of Attorney Pat McBrayer. She was the sister to the late Hatcher N. Webb and was married to the late Dr. Evans McBrayer. He recalls her as being so gentle, so interested

in children, and so easy to cry if everything didn't go just right.

Later the children walked a little over a mile to the Sharon School, a log building in which had been placed rough slab seats with no backs. There were no blackboards, no chalk, no glass windows; only the crudest of furniture and a very simple wood burning stove.

Much of John's early education and the only formal education many of his contemporaries received was from the blue back spellers.

This elementary spelling book by Noah Webster, Lld., was printed by the American Book Company in 1880. Compared with books today it was cheap, poorly bound, had no pictures or illustrations, and only one advertisement; that was of Webster's International and collegiate dictionary. Very few people in Cleveland County had a dictionary.

However, the speller did contain a complete analysis of all the sounds in the English language. It contained the keys to pronunciation, excellent demonstrations of phonics and illustrations of how to make all the letters and all the numbers of the alphabet both in the old English forms and in the new and very beautiful flowing script.

Men and women who were educated in nothing but Webster's spelling book and later McGuffey's reader, basic mathematics, and the Bible, were considered to be well educated.

It may be that the failure to use the simple principles in this old blue back speller in our modern schools is one of the reasons "why Johnny can't read".

Webster began teaching the child to read by some very familiar sentences such as "She fed the old hen." He later added, "Ann can hem my cap." He then began to add sentences with moral connotations like "Strong drink will debase a man", or "Idle men often delay till tomorrow things that should be done today", or "Good men obey the laws of God".

From time to time he would introduce basic economics.

"A dollar is worth a hundred cents" and then added, "One hundred cents are worth a dollar". There is some question in the minds of our economists today as to just how much a dollar is worth. In those days the scholar owned his own slate and pencil and his own books. Webster said, "Good boys will use their books with care."

The young student was directed to study anatomy; "We move our limbs at the joints", and "Men get their growth before they are thirty".

He learned of women. "Girls are fond of fine beads to wear around their necks."

Throughout the entire book were numerous lessons in spelling. There were lists of the most common words broken into syllables and accented for proper pronunciation.

John was five years old when Alec, a Negro hired man, and the mules were drowned.

One day his father sent the oldest and most trusted colored man to Shelby to buy supplies for the tenants. Alec was driving four mules to a wagon. He got to town, bought the provisions and started home. All went well until someone saw him riding into Broad River, which he had to ford. He was on one of the lead mules' back and seemed unconscious of his peril until the water was up to his knees.

When he jumped off the mule and swam across the river and caught some bushes, a farmer who witnessed the scene called to Alec to come on out because he could not do anything for the mules as the river had risen and was very swift from the recent rains. He had crossed the bridge going to town. Alec turned the bush loose and swam back just as the two front mules went down. He tried to cut the other two loose but went down with them.

Father Batie was quite a distance from the house when Mother heard the news. She was so nervous she could not blow the dinner horn which was a signal of distress unless blown at mealtime. She had to call one of the servants, a

dwarfed, bow-legged Negro boy. John said he stood on the gate to listen. "Such a shriek as that blast was! It literally rent the air," he said. When Father hastened home, he said he was sure one of the children had fallen into the well. When told what had happened, he paced the corridor for some time.

Finally he stopped and said, "I don't mind losing the wagon and the mules. If only Alec had not drowned."

With a twinkle in his eye, John recalls investigating a crow's nest at the age of eight. He had successfully climbed a forty-foot pine and had discovered two or three precious crow eggs and also had discovered that climbing down a tree with the eggs was not going to be as easy as climbing up.

It became a rather urgent matter to get down quickly because mama and papa crow were angrily swooping in to investigate the "animal" that was robbing their nest. Little John carefully slipped the eggs into his blue blouse which was drawn around his waist with the stylish puckering string. That would be a nice place to carry the eggs, he thought.

Then forgetting the eggs and only thinking of getting down, he pressed his chest to the trunk of the tree and slid down. On reaching the ground he discovered he had one of the nicest messes of scrambled crow eggs he could imagine. Then and there he resolved that never again would he rob a crow's nest.

He grew up in the dark days just following the Civil War when the Yankees were trying to reconstruct the South. His father had been in the infantry under Captain Jim Wells of Cleveland County. His Uncle George Wray had gone into the service and supplied his own horse. After Appomattox, his father with three other Cleveland County men abandoned their horses in Virginia, since they were too poor and weak to ride, and walked all the way to Shelby. Mr. Suttle's immediate family missed the wars. None of his brothers was ever in service. However, his

grandson, Billy Joe Erwin, had just finished a term in service; and another grandson, Joe Cabaniss, was in World War II.

There was still a lot of talk about Ku Klux when Suttle was a little boy. His father joined the Klan but was never on a raid. Of the Klan he said, "They did a lot of good, but they went too far."

II

Who Spilled The Molasses?

"O MASTER, LET ME WALK WITH THEE"

When I became a man, I put away childish things.

I Corinthians 13:11b

"Hitch the mules to the wagon, John. We'll drive down to Little Egypt today to get a little corn. This is the driest weather I ever remember."

Thus father Suttle addressed John one fall morning in the early 80's after the driest summer Cleveland County had ever known. It had not rained enough in six months to put a season in the ground. Crops were planted but virtually nothing came up. Only in the lowest bottom land did corn get big enough to put on an ear.

Buffalo Creek, about eight miles east of Shelby, had a broad fertile valley which in ordinary times would grow twice as much of anything as any other land and even in a severe drought would grow a little corn. For years it had been known as "Little Egypt" because the farmers there always had some corn and other grain.

This year all of the small streams, many of the wells, and all except the boldest springs had dried up. Not until

early winter did enough rain fall to fill up the cracks in the stream beds all over the county.

With the same farm wagon, young John from time to time hired himself out for hauling jobs. On one occasion he contracted to haul brick from the old Hendrick farm about a mile northwest of the court square to be used in building the store where his cousins, the Wrays, now operate a department store.

The brick were being made and kilned on the farm now owned by Mr. and Mrs. Earl Meacham on Lee Street. They had to be picked up one at a time and placed carefully in the wagon.

One morning the owner of the brick yard was away and his wife was left to count the brick. She would not let the boys load the wagon until she counted every brick. For one load she was in the house and Suttle and his friend loaded the wagon anyway.

"You lazy boys just as well unload every one of them brick so I can count them," she said. However, young John stood his ground and told her that he had stacked them up in rows and it would be actually easier to count by fives and tens instead of the usual ones. This she finally agreed to do.

In the same wagon the Suttle family occasionally visited the Rutherford kinfolks. These trips would sometimes take two or three days or as long as a week. Rutherfordton was merely the adjoining county seat, but 25 or 30 miles over muddy, rutted roads in a wagon that poked along at from two to five miles per hour took a great deal of time.

One of the places he best remembers is the home place of Aunt "Sooky" Young. He also visited at the home of Max and Bess Gardner, who were grandchildren of Mrs. Young. Mr. Suttle's mother and Max Gardner were first cousins. G. W. Wray was a brother to Mrs. Young. He also visited an Uncle John Blanton at Forest City and another uncle, M. A. Suttle. The roads were usually muddy or dusty but in spite of the poor travel he always enjoyed the trip.

Among relatives, one of his keenest recollections is of his Uncle James Wray, his mother's brother. Mr. Wray was a farmer and later worked for the town of Shelby and was in charge of all labor by convicts. He moved to Greensboro, where he lived until his death. For many, many years he was the official handshaker at the front door of the First Baptist Church in Greensboro. Mrs. Maggie Wiseman of Greensboro is a daughter.

One of John's more prominent cousins was the late R. R. Haynes of Cliffside, a textile and organizing genius who built a multi-million dollar empire in the late 90's and the early part of the 20th century. His grandmother Suttle was also a first cousin to the late C. J. Hamrick, a pioneer merchant and philanthropist of Boiling Springs.

In the middle 80's the economic outlook in the little village of Shelby was poor indeed. So at the age of 14, Father Suttle thought it best that John go to Ridgeway, South Carolina, to spend some time with Uncle Charles Wray and learn the mercantile business. This he agreed to do at the munificent salary of \$8.33 per month plus room and board.

His days as a merchant apprentice of South Carolina were numbered to thirteen months when he concluded that he would need more education if he were going to be successful at anything. It may be that the affair with the molasses had something to do with his decision.

One cold morning when he opened up the store, the entire storage room was covered with molasses. Uncle Charles arrived a few minutes later and in a brisk way questioned each clerk. "Who did this? How did this happen? Who left the stopper out of the barrel?"

John remembered the last customer on the previous night wanted molasses. Uncle Charles had waited on him and perhaps in his haste had failed to insert the peg tight enough to hold the molasses in the barrel. This particular uncle was very exact, very cautious, and very correct in every little detail. When he finally saw that the finger of suspicion pointed to him, he sent the clerks about their

business, hired a boy to clean the floor and from that day on never mentioned molasses again.

Back home in Shelby, John entered the military school of Captain W. T. R. Bell. John has strong memories of Captain Bell and another teacher in the school known as Professor P. J. King. Military type schools were popular in that day since a great number of teachers had been military men in the Civil War. Captain Bell had an impressive military bearing, and Professor King was known for his ability as a disciplinarian. On several occasions he had been known to whip grown men.

"I believe younger children were rougher and more apt to fight and engage in some sort of devilment and pranks than in our present schools," says John.

"For instance, one day two of my friends, Ab and Los Harrill, took a tombstone out of the cemetery and set it on the lawn of Dr. L. N. Durham, a dentist. Then, they removed the dentist's professional sign and attached it to the tombstone. On another occasion they took Professor King's buggy apart and left the vehicle entirely disassembled.

"I think one of the funniest things that ever happened in Shelby was the night some pranksters took a calf to school and tied his tail to the bell rope. No one in town knew why the school bell was ringing until finally someone got to school early the next morning and found the poor, scared, witless calf ringing the bell with all his might and, no doubt, wondering who was holding him by the tail."

During these early years of working and learning and growing, John had some strange stirrings deep down in his soul. He remembered the tales about the wonderful ministry of his grandfather and of his relatives, the preacher Webbs, and he also was thrilled to the very depth when he heard sermons by Tommy Dixon and G. W. Rollins. Late one night after finishing his instructions at Captain Bell's school, he made a decision. After much deliberation

and prayer and talking with his mother, he decided to preach. At the age of seventeen in 1889, he was licensed to preach.

John considered several schools but finally decided upon the Southern Baptist Seminary at Louisville, Kentucky, and hopefully packed his trunk for the longest journey he had ever taken. There were no automobiles in that day so he made the trip by train in early fall.

He doesn't remember much about all of his teachers but he was greatly impressed by Dr. John A. Broadus, at that time head of the Seminary; by Dr. Basil Manly, by Dr. F. H. Kerfoot, by Dr. W. H. Whitsitt, and by Dr. John R. Sampey.

In Louisville he began preaching and was assigned to a little mission church at 17th and Main. This church is now one of the fine Baptist churches of that great metropolitan center.

One night one of his fellow students became ill and had to go to the hospital. He had a nurse, but some of the students were allowed to sit with him also. John was talking to the nurse and thought she acted a little bit different from the girls he had known in Shelby. After the conversation proceeded, he discovered that she was a Catholic and was studying to become a nun. She had been disappointed in love and had taken up nursing to substitute for her sorrow.

"I advised her not to 'jump out of the frying pan into the fire' and further advised her to slip away and not let a broken heart ruin her life. She did go to another city and I understand married well and apparently was very happy."

One evening after class John got back to his room a little earlier than usual. He was surprised to see a man's foot sticking out from under the bed. He grabbed a pistol from the dresser drawer of his roommate and commanded the intruder to come out. "I marched him out into the street expecting to find an officer but there was no officer in sight. I marched him on down to the corner and still

didn't see an officer. I gave him a chance to run, which he did. I honestly don't know which of us was the most pleased."

In the spring of 1891, with two years of Seminary training under his belt, John returned to Shelby to begin his long career in the ministry. He had just turned 19 when a presbytery met in the First Baptist Church on the first Sunday in May, 1891, at 3:00 P.M. to examine and ordain him. Young ministers today would wonder if they were well prepared to preach after they had received only the equivalent of two years in high school and two years in the Seminary with no college training whatever. Be that as it may, even this much education was far ahead of the people John was to preach to and was considerably more than the average preacher in rural North Carolina had at that time.

The certificate of ordination read, "We, the undersigned, hereby certify that at a council convened at the call of the First Baptist Church in Shelby, North Carolina, and after satisfactory examination in regard to his Christian experience, call to the ministry and views of Bible Doctrine, we solemnly and publicly set apart and ordained John W. Suttle to the work of the Gospel Ministry, on the Sunday of May 6, 1891, at three o'clock in the afternoon." This simple statement was signed by the Reverend J. A. Sproles, Moderator; T. K. Barnett, Secretary; the Reverend Tom Dixon, the Reverend J. M. Bridges, the Reverend G. M. Webb, and the Reverend R. L. Limbrick (Limerick).

A number of other ministers, laymen, and friends of the family were present for this very simple but heart warming ceremony and after the hands were laid on, the charge given, and the Bible presented, he remembers that a big deacon, genial and warm hearted J. Y. Hamrick, grasped his hand and said, "Now, John, you be a preacher of the great gospel." Deacon Hamrick's sons, grandsons, and great-grandsons have been living witnesses at Boiling Springs, Double Springs, and Beaver Dam, that John



Young
Minister
and
Groom



Young
Bride
and
Housewife

preached a "Great Gospel"; that they, in their Christian experience, were benefited by it.

Baptists in Blacksburg soon heard there was a young minister in Shelby available and that although quite young, he was a Seminary man. After some investigation of his family, background, and qualifications, a call was extended to become the pastor at Blacksburg. John drove the fifteen miles from Shelby to Blacksburg on Saturday in time for the Saturday meeting and would remain there over the weekend either in the home of one of his members or would drive back up to Grover, where he had relatives and friends. When he became established at Blacksburg, he accepted once-a-month preaching service at a smaller church, El Bethel, located southwest across big Broad River.

He also preached at other small churches in that section but did not become their regular pastor.

His wife, Leila—whom he met at Blacksburg—recalls that he looked the part of a young minister for that day and time.

"He was a young fellow about 21, just out of school, but he looked like he had just come out of a band box and appeared to be very important indeed with his high top silk beaver hat, sideburns, long tailed coat, cane, dog, and one of the finest rubber tired buggies and high spirited horses to be found in this part of the country.

"Such an outfit and such a rig labeled him as the ultimate among the young ministers."

In order to give John a little experience, one of his kinsmen, the Reverend G. M. Webb, asked him to help hold a meeting at the Long Creek Baptist Church in Gaston County. Here he got the experience of baptizing his first convert, a full grown woman by the name of Mrs. Stowe. Dr. J. L. Vipperman, a long-time friend of John Suttle, is now pastor of this progressive church.

During the meeting with Brother Webb at Long Creek, young John was invited to dinner by a rather eccentric woman. He went along and had dinner, a very good din-

ner, but he didn't understand exactly why he and no one else was invited.

"Have you finished your dinner, preacher?" she inquired.

"Yes, why do you ask?"

"Don't ask too many questions," she said and continued to act a little strangely.

After he had finally finished and had gotten up from the table, he started to get his coat and hat as if to leave. "You can't go yet. Come with me."

"Where are you going?"

She said not a word except motioned for him to come along and started toward the creek. The young minister stayed a respectable distance behind this old lady, but she kept looking back at him, motioning and urging him to come on.

Finally she got to the creek, then cut down the bank of the creek and had to go through some thick bushes and woods. He got farther and farther behind and she kept urging him to come on and he began to be a little more adamant about following. But finally, following at such a distance, they came to a clearing, an opening where there was a shoal in the creek.

At this point the woman stopped and let him catch up with her.

He got within five or six feet not knowing at what moment she might grab him or make some crazy move. She stopped and then her countenance changed, her face became very serious and she began to have a few tears in her eyes as she pointed to the shoal and to a small pool below the shoal and said, "This is where your grandfather, Joseph Suttle, baptized me. I was the first person to be baptized as a member of this church."

John then understood the nature of her insistence at his coming and not telling him exactly where they were going or what they were going to do. After a moment of prayer they went back to the house as great friends.

At one time while still a very young preacher, John accepted the invitation of an old colored woman, whose parents had once been slaves of his Grandfather Wray, to go to the colored section of Shelby to preach.

Her name was Sarah Wray and Aunt Sarah was the first one at the church. She sat on the front row with all the pride of a mother whose prodigal son had just come home. She listened intently and with her dusky eyes followed every move from the time he reached the platform. By the time he had warmed up on his subject, she was enthused. By the time Brother Suttle was two-thirds of the way through his sermon, Big Sarah got up and began to shout and turned around to the audience, clapped her hands, turned her face, glistening with perspiration, to the ceiling and shouted to everybody. "Just listen to my baby preach about Jesus. Glory Hallelujah."

Three-quarters of a century ago Shelby was hardly a town at all. It was indeed a homey little crossroads village. The county was named for Colonel Benjamin Cleveland of Revolutionary War fame, and the town itself was named for Colonel Isaac Shelby of the same war and who fought with Cleveland at the memorable, tide-turning battle of Kings Mountain.

No streets were paved. There were no public utilities, no city water or sewer conveniences, although there were a few lamps on the main streets which usually were lighted after dark.

Now in his middle 80's, Brother John likes to ride through the familiar streets of his home town. On West Marion where he lives now, he can see the field in which his father used to plant and plow corn. One-half million dollars has been invested in a community recreation center; there are swimming pools, swings and rides for the kiddies, and back of which is a modern golf course.

"When I was growing up we got our exercise by swinging an ax instead of a golf club," he says.

On this same street are the old family homes of his father, Charles Batie; of his mother's people, the J. A. L.

Wrays; of his cousin, Dr. O. P. Gardner, father of Governor Max Gardner; of Jess McMurry who built a large cotton mill; of Clyde R. Hoey who became both governor and senator; and of George Blanton, son of a banker, brother of a banker, father of a banker and, incidentally, a millionaire several times over.

"The families of all these people did not live in such fine houses in the old days, but they were nice enough and were as good as any in town," he said.

Some days he rides out on North Morgan and goes by the home place of old Judge Lattimore, which is still occupied by Lattimore's son, Dr. Everette B. Lattimore. On this street also lived several members of the McBrayer family, and "Uncle" Willie Wilson; also it is the traditional location of the old Methodist parsonage.

Just a block east of Morgan is North LaFayette Street, where he often visited the home of Dock Suttle.

"Many a time I would come out to Uncle Dock's just to have the fun of drawing water. They had a spring away down the hill and a trolley for the bucket to run on. The rope and windlass would let the bucket go down the hill at least 100 yards and automatically fill up the bucket. Then I would draw it back up to the house. In a way it was like having a very deep well but it was a little more fun than drawing water out of a well."

Another interesting place on this street was the old foundry where the Babingtons melted metals and poured them into molds.

Anywhere he goes, whether early in the morning or late afternoon, in the now growing town of 20,000 persons, he has only to close his eyes and look back over the decades to imagine the childhood scenes in which the Durhams, Dixons, Gardners, Hoeyes, Webbs, Weathers, and other Shelbians of state and national fame romped in the street.

III

"Hoppin' John" In Blacksburg, S. C.

"SOMEBODY STOLE MY GAL."

*And another said, I have married a wife
and, therefore, I cannot come.*

Luke 14:20

"We are having Hoppin' John for dinner! Hooray, we are having Hoppin' John; I'm so glad we are having Hoppin' John for dinner!"

This gleeful announcement was being made in the home of Miss Leila Pierson—sixteen, of Blacksburg, South Carolina—by her younger brother. Her guest for the day was John W. Suttle (the Reverend John W. Suttle, that is), the new pastor at the First Baptist Church; and not only that, but also her fiancé.

"When I heard that boy whooping and hollering about 'Hoppin' John', I was madder than a hornet. I thought he was talking about me. I thought he was being a 'smart alec' and making fun of the way I limped. My left leg has been shorter than the right leg since I was a little boy, and I walk with a sort of a limp and a hop.

"While I was getting ready to chew that boy's ears off, somebody called us to dinner, and I learned that he was

not talking about me after all. He was talking about a very special Sunday dinner dish at the Pierson home called 'Hoppin' John'."

It has long been a very popular dish of the deep South, and consists, among other things, of rice and peas, bits of chicken or other meat, with a delicious seasoning, and may be prepared with either dumplings or crust.

Home from the Seminary with a trunk full of notes, sermon outlines, and his head bursting with ideas for becoming a successful Baptist preacher, John was at Shelby only a few days before he was called as pastor of the First Baptist Church in Blacksburg.

At this time Blacksburg was a thriving railroad center, being a regional repair and supply station for two large and busy railroads. It was one of the principal stops for Southern trains between Charlotte and Atlanta, and was important in like manner for the CCC Railroad which had just been completed. These three C's stood for Charleston, Columbia and Cincinnati. It was later changed to CC and O (Charleston, Columbia, and Ohio) and was very important for many years in transporting tremendous loads of coal out of the mountains of North Carolina, West Virginia, and Kentucky.

Blacksburg had four saloons and the famed Cherokee Inn.

The Baptist Church in Blacksburg was very small but during the first year John was there, twenty-seven members were added.

For nearly a year John lived at Shelby and drove to Blacksburg each weekend for the business meeting and worship services. Sometime during that year he became acquainted with Leila Pierson, teenage daughter of a Southern Railway conductor.

"Some folks say that a preacher won't steal," but during that time he not only dated and courted, but stole, married, and then baptized the girl of his choice and began

what has turned out to be one of the longest love affairs of Cleveland County.

Both Mr. and Mrs. Suttle are a bit reluctant to tell about the details of this early courtship and marriage but both agree that it was love at first sight and that nothing, including her plans to go to college in Georgia, or the temporary disfavor of her parents at marrying at so tender an age, could keep them apart. Mr. Pierson not only did not favor her getting married so young, but he was not too anxious that she marry a preacher, especially a poor Baptist preacher.

The Piersons were Methodist, very strong believers in their faith, and loyal to their own church. However, with the aid of several friends a plan was worked out by which John got the license, got Leila five miles away at Grover, where they were married by an old friend, the Reverend J. L. Sproles.

The two were married on March 29, 1893, at the home of the Reverend Mr. Mullinax. Witnesses were Mr. Suttle's brother, Joe L. Suttle; his sister, Irene Suttle; a cousin, Maggie Wray; a Dr. G. H. McCubbins, and Gus Bridges.

Dr. Sproles later helped John in a revival meeting in Blacksburg and was a close friend until his death a good many years ago.

While at Blacksburg, the Suttles experienced their first "pounding". Many modern-day preachers never get the experience of having their members shower them with all sorts of gifts, especially food, clothing and household items. Since the salary was small it was the custom in that day and time to pound the preacher at least once and sometimes twice a year.

Members usually tried to keep the pounding a secret but many times the efforts to keep the secret gave the plan away so the minister or his wife could sort of halfway guess what Sunday it was going to be.

There was always a great deal of excitement when a pounding was anticipated or by chance it did come as a surprise. The white tablecloth was always put on the din-

ing table and there was a lot of sweeping and cleaning, putting up fresh curtains and bringing in great loads of wood to burn in all the fireplaces.

At their first pounding the entire congregation came about eight o'clock in the evening with their arms full of everything imaginable for the family larder and also many nice things to wear. Since the new minister had not completely furnished his house, the good people at Blacksburg this time brought him a set of chairs and a great many wedding presents.

At this particular pounding one big deacon who was fond of jokes brought in a big new buggy whip. It was really to go in John's buggy but he said in a loud voice where everyone could hear, "Now Brother Suttle, I want you to use this whip to bring up your family in the admonition of the Lord." Of course, all the people laughed and the poor blushing bride did not know what to say or do except blush. That she did profusely.

The first year they were married John decided he needed more deacons in the church so they were voted on. One was a bachelor dentist. All went well until one day the dentist came to the pastor in great distress. When questioned his reply was, "I cannot accept the deaconship, for the Bible plainly says a deacon must be the husband of one wife."

John assured him that it was all right that he did not have a wife. He was ordained and made a perfectly splendid deacon.

While at Blacksburg, Brother John took a part time pastorate at a small rural church, El Bethel. This church was across big Broad River from Blacksburg, about seven or eight miles southwest of Gaffney. It was a considerable distance to drive, so John and his bride would ride over on Saturday, spend the night and come back Monday. Many times they would stay at a lovely old colonial home where there was a large family but plenty of room for the minister and his wife. Mrs. Suttle remembers a good many

things about El Bethel and the trips they used to make once a month to that community, but one particular feature she will never forget is about the man with so many cats.

"I was surprised at the first meal to see the head of the house pile up a plate just as high as he could stack the food and take it up to the hearth and start calling, 'Kitty, kitty'.

"I have never seen so many cats. There were gray ones, black ones, white ones, red ones, and tabbys. They seemed to come from everywhere; from under the bed, from under the house, from the barn, from the weeds and trees and from all over the place. The family said that was his hobby and that he fed all those cats three times a day every day in the year. They said he had at least fifty cats and that sometimes there were more."

While living in Blacksburg, the Suttles made frequent visits to Shelby. It was only twelve miles and took about two hours to drive. Mrs. Suttle recalls on one occasion it took a good bit longer since the new horse John had bought turned out to be a former delivery horse and every time he passed a house the horse thought he was supposed to stop.

"We soon got rid of this delivery horse and traded for a beautiful horse and a rubber tired buggy. We thought we were really traveling in style riding on rubber tires with good springs. That was a long time before automobiles or airplanes, but I guess it was fast enough for our day.

"Now I see planes flying in the air almost as high as the distance from Shelby to Blacksburg, and which could cover that twelve miles before a man could turn a horse and buggy around in the road."

While he was still pastor at Blacksburg their first child, Bertie Lee, was born, on December 31, 1893. For this very important occasion John brought his wife to Shelby to his father's old home place where Mrs. Suttle could be attended by members of his family and by their family doctor, the late Dr. Victor McBrayer. There was no hospital, no

nurses with white gowns, and no anesthetic, but as Mrs. Suttle recalls, the ordeal was not too bad. She had the consolation that she and her new baby had as good care as anyone could have. When the little girl was six weeks old John had received a call to Albemarle, and so plans were made to move the growing family to Stanly County.

While John was pastor, there was an old character who lived near Blacksburg known as "Wild Bill Davis". He lived in an old piano box and all his possessions were stored in the same box. Winter, summer, rain, or shine, he stayed out in the woods with only the old box for shelter. For food he ate roots and berries and what little supplies residents of the village of Blacksburg would take to him.

He became such an institution that far and wide he was known as the "Wild Man of Blacksburg". People would drive for miles and miles to go out into the woods to see him and the desolate hovel in which he lived.

John Blalock of Mooresboro who was one of John Suttle's members at Sandy Run was quite a young boy when he lived near Blacksburg. One day he went out to see Wild Bill and in awe at the sordid surroundings blurted out, "Are you a really wild man, Mr. Bill?" Said Bill, "I ain't so durned wild as you might think and I ain't half as crazy as some of these fools that come to see me."

IV

Mr. Pickler Breaks A Toe In Stanly County

“GUIDE ME, O THOU GREAT JEHOVAH”

Go ye therefore, and teach all nations baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.

Matthew 28:19-20

Brother Suttle was the first resident pastor of the First Baptist Church at Albemarle, although he was the fourth pastor since the church was organized. He served from 1894 through 1897 at an annual salary of \$125. When he first took the new church there were only 26 members, of which all except two were women. In 1897 when he resigned to go to Johnston County, the membership had increased to 100, of which about half were men and half were women.

One hundred and twenty-five dollars a year was not enough to live on even if supplemented by a family cow, a couple of pigs and ten acres of land for grazing and gardening. John supplemented his income by taking several small churches: Anderson's grove at \$50, Kendall's at \$80, Palmerville at \$100, Silver Springs at \$80, and Union Grove at \$20, annually. This was a grand total of \$375 promised for a year's work. These churches had a

total membership of 631 persons, and at that time none except Albemarle had meetings more often than once a month.

Mrs. Lula Shaver, one of the oldest members of the Albemarle Church and a long-time friend and correspondent of the Suttles, remembers very vividly a number of things about his pastorate there. "I remember the first time I saw Brother John. He had on a little straw hat somewhat like the boys wear today. He worked hard, was full of life and humor and was very convincing in his preaching.

"He never threw anything away, and he and his family would wear their clothes as long as they were useful and then patch them or mend them when it became necessary. I remember seeing him hauling feed, corn, logs, or lumber in his little one-horse wagon.

"He seemed to have a habit of attending all kinds of conventions wherever Baptists assembled. Not only did he attend, but he was a leader whether the crowd was large or small.

"He was interested in politics but so far as I know, there is no record that he took sides with either Democrats or Republicans. He had a good disposition and could get along well with everybody.

"One elderly lady who lives here in Albemarle now remembers that when she was a little girl she rode the new minister piggy-back, so I assume he must have had a good disposition."

The church at Albemarle did not have a baptistry, so Brother John set about to get one constructed. It was made just beyond the boundary of the church property and was fashioned somewhat like a large tank or boat with the boards being tongued and grooved, then caulked and waterproofed to hold the water. A man named Frank Cooper was hired to haul water from the Efird Manufacturing Company artesian well. The water was run from the well to the baptistry in long wooden troughs and were so used until 1909 when an iron pipe carried water from

a bored well. A little gasoline engine was used to furnish the power until around 1918.

A good many Baptists have wondered why Albemarle erected its church without a baptistry, but one thing was certain. Brother John was going to solve the problem and baptize all of his new converts by immersion even if he had to build the pool out of wood.

Several misfortunes befell the Suttles while living at Albemarle. Young Charles, his son, fell and broke his leg. John had a very severe illness which was thought to be typhoid fever followed by nervousness and indigestion. The oldest daughter also had typhoid and many of the neighbors who had been helping the young minister found themselves so occupied with their own sick and dying they could offer very little help.

There were no electric lights, no water except from the well, no telephone, and no inside bathrooms. Mrs. Suttle says, "I remember digging holes in the woods near the parsonage to bury any and everything that might cause fever to spread. I was afraid from day to day that I, too, might come down with it."

While in Stanly County Mr. Suttle was greatly interested in hunting. Most of the time he kept two or three beagle hounds which helped him hunt rabbits. He considered himself a very good shot.

One day he had a pet crow which got so pesky the little rascal swooped down from the door and got a piece of chicken off the plate on the table; it then flew out into the yard and lit on a stump to eat it. Brother John said it made him so mad he "shot the crow while it was eating that piece of chicken."

From time to time in those days he would go gigging for fish and often got enough for Sunday dinner. They were so plentiful many times he could gig them without even having to get out of his buggy. On one occasion he caught a large opossum while coming from the Sunday service. Mr. 'possum was up a tree on the side of the road. On

other occasions he joined in fox and coon hunts either with members or residents of the community.

Brother John said in Albemarle, as always, he had to work for a living. "The most luck I ever had was hard work, but I do not consider myself as unlucky as the salesman who was selling fountain pens but was so poor he had to write the orders with a pencil."

Mrs. Suttle remembers some of the more interesting details of moving to Albemarle. During the summer of 1894, John had resigned at Blacksburg after two years of successful ministry, to take a pastorate in Florida, but in the early part of the summer he became ill with dysentery and later decided to accept the call to Albemarle. In order to get to Albemarle from Shelby, Mr. Suttle and his family had to drive by carriage ten miles to Grover where they took the Southern Railroad passenger train to Salisbury. After a night in Salisbury, they drove again by horse and buggy to Albemarle and arrived late in the afternoon.

For the first time in her life Mrs. Suttle was alone with her baby. In a year and a half after arriving at Albemarle she gave birth to her second child, and only son, Charles Batie, born July 25, 1895. He was named for his grandfather and among his playmates was known as "C. B."

With two babies to take care of now, Mrs. Suttle depended upon the Albemarle neighbors for help. Of some of the Albemarle experiences she says, "We were finally established in a big old ten-room house but had only enough furniture for four rooms. The big house with the big rooms and tall ceilings made me feel very lonely at times.

"The stories about the house made me feel even more lonely and apprehensive. There were a great many superstitions connected with this place. Many of them were connected with a family of an eccentric old physician who once lived there. I understood that most of his family had died with typhoid fever. At one time there was a great number of handsome old trees around the old house but the talk of the community was that the old doctor was so distressed about losing his family that he sought to ruin

the beauty of the place before he left. To kill the trees, it was said he poured brine about the roots in such quantities that they withered and died.

"One story about this strange old place was that one of the residents had some queer ideas about chickens. He thought they ought to have sense enough to stay at home. He also thought his neighbor's chickens should stay home. He made a bargain with this neighbor that if the chickens of either of them trespassed upon the other's property, they were to be killed at once. He bought some very fine high priced chickens and in a few days he happened to notice in his stable what he thought was his neighbor's chickens. He went back into the house, got his gun, and in a rage fired into the group of chickens and killed them all. Then he went across the way to tell his neighbor what he had done. The neighbor asked him to wait just a minute while she went out to her own chicken house. After a quick inspection she told the old gentleman all her chickens were at home.

"He had killed his own birds by mistake. However, he was a good sport and like many doctors, buried his own mistake without a word and no one ever heard him mention chickens again.

"I understand this old house where we lived has now been torn down and that the present beautiful Albemarle First Baptist Church stands in its place.

"As John continued to work here the church grew and by the time he had two or three revival meetings, the church felt like it could undertake the building of a new parsonage. Dr. L. R. Pruitt of Charlotte had helped in two meetings and the Reverend M. A. Adams in one. A Mr. Cicero Parker gave an acre of land to build a new parsonage on. Various land owners and members gave logs from their timber. John hauled most of the logs to the sawmill with the aid of a half-grown boy. It was then sawed into lumber, and members volunteered to do the rough carpentering instead of giving money. In fact, the members did the complete job of building the house

under the direction of a competent carpenter. It was a very nice six-room house with a wide hall and a porch half way around it. We were very proud when we moved into it.

"A few days after we moved into our new home, I got the most severe fright I remember in my life. On a very hot day I raised the dining room window to get a little extra fresh air. About the time I got the window up I saw a big blacksnake raise his head even with the window sill looking like he wanted to come in. I let the window down much quicker than I raised it.

"The members also built us a nice big barn where we kept our horse and buggy along with the cow, several pigs, some rabbits, two beagle hounds and the old pet crow.

"Shortly after we built the house we had a visitor, a very old preacher. He came to wish the new minister well and, of course, stayed for dinner. For dessert that day I had cake with currants. After dinner I found all the currants picked out of his cake and tucked under his plate. I have often wondered what he thought they were. Perhaps he just didn't like currants.

"Our next-door neighbors had two children, a girl and a boy. One of them would stay with me when John was away at night. The boy was big enough to do a little plowing for John. He also watered his horse at our well. This horse was quite gentle and the children would climb all over him or ride him bareback at a full gallop. One day while cooking dinner, I heard a great noise in the back hall. This boy, Tom, had coaxed his horse into the house just for a joke.

"John was quite ill at one time and the doctor would not allow any visitors to see him. However, one very persistent deacon came one day and insisted on seeing the minister and said he would stay only a few minutes. After saying 'howdy' his first remarks to John were, 'Well, I thought you would have been dead by now'."

During the four years the Suttles were in Albemarle,



High in the Hills at Marshall, N. C.

thirty-two persons were baptized, fifty-four others joined the church and one was restored. A total of \$910.77 was donated to benevolence and the pastor received the \$500 promised for four years' service.

The new parsonage cost a total of \$975 in addition to the work contributed by the members, and all was paid for the first year with the exception of \$100 for which 25 of the brethren gave their notes guaranteeing \$4 each until that amount was paid. Z. D. Coggins was chairman of the Building Committee and was aided by E. C. Bird and W. Ashley Tucker, the latter being foreman of construction.

A few years ago when the old parsonage was torn down to make way for the new sanctuary, one of the Albemarle newspapers carried a picture and a story about the long history of the house and editorialized, "With the exception of wear and tear little changes have been taking place in this structure in which so much joy, happiness, sorrow, pain and death have been shared by so many fine people".

The Reverend J. Boyce Brooks until recently was pastor at Albemarle First Church which has nearly 900 members. The church last year raised nearly \$70,000 for all causes. There are seven other Baptist churches in Albemarle whose combined membership and gifts far exceed the parent church. So much can happen in sixty years.

A number of rural churches secured the services of Mr. Suttle while he was pastor at Albemarle. Most of these small, struggling churches had preaching only once a month with perhaps a message on Saturday afternoon before the regular preaching service.

Palmerville was one of the strongest and best working churches in Stanly County. Professor E. F. Eddings had a splendid high school and with a large number of boarding pupils attending. Several of these students joined the church during revivals, among whom were Hugh Efird, oldest brother in the noted Efird Department Store Chain. Another was Claude Sikes of Union County, a brother to the late E. W. Sikes, one-time president of Clemson Col-

lege. John preached at Palmerville four years, during which time thirty persons joined by baptism, two by letter, with one restored, and gifts for benevolences amounted to \$743.23.

Kendalls Baptist Church was about eight miles from Albemarle and John preached there once a month. In 1895 the church house was an oblong wooden building seating about 250 persons. The membership was quite small and attendance poor when he began. There were no Sunday School rooms and the various classes grouped themselves in different corners of the building so as not to disturb each other while teaching. Later they put up curtains to simulate classrooms. Of course, the noise was just as great, but the pupils could not see each other and could not see outside since there were few windows.

John had a small box Kodak and occasionally took pictures of his family and church members. One day when he was ready to snap the picture of a small Sunday School child, the child's older sister stopped him and said, "Papa doesn't allow us to have our pictures taken". Brother John did not understand why he could not make a picture of this nice little girl but later upon visiting in the home, found that there was not a photograph or picture of any kind in the house. Upon inquiring of the father, he was told that the Bible forbids photographs. He then took his Bible down and read the passage from Exodus which says, "Thou shalt have no graven images before thee".

John tried to explain to him this verse meant not to worship images. He finally let him make the picture not only of the child but the entire family. Later when John visited again he found the small snapshot along with enlarged sizes in every room of the house.

This same man was opposed to having an organ in the church. He said that if one were brought in the front door he would go out the back door. He also told Brother Suttle, "If you will show me the word organ in the Bible, I will not only surrender my views but will give \$5 on

a new one". By chance John knew exactly where to turn and quickly turned to Psalm 150:6 where it says "Praise Him with stringed instruments and organs". As good as his word, the man read it and put the \$5 bill in John's hand. He was a man of deep convictions and once he realized he was wrong, was big enough to admit it. It wasn't long before the organ was brought into the Kendall Church and no one enjoyed it more than this man, for he was the leader of the singing.

While at Kendalls Brother Suttle baptized 45 and received eighteen others by letter and collected the sum of \$235.28, in addition to his salary.

The character who stands out most in his mind was a man named John Miller who was always at the front door. He was untalented, not a teacher, could not pray, but he could stand at the front door and shake hands with everybody.

Silver Springs is about eight miles from Albemarle in a different direction from Kendalls. This church house was also small and inadequate, but since that time the community has grown and a modern sanctuary and Sunday School plant now are being used by several hundred members.

In 1896, Dr. Bruce Benton helped Brother John with a meeting there. Mr. Suttle recalls that several families in the church at that time were so enthusiastic with their religion that they gave way to the old custom of shouting and singing. One hot night during the meeting when a large number of the worshipers had "got religion", John and Bruce left the pulpit and went out into the yard to get a fresh breath of air. They stayed several minutes and the shouting went right on. In fact, some of the shouters did not even miss the preachers until they were exhausted. When things began to quiet down the ministers went back in and dismissed the congregation.

In 1950, Mr. Charles A. Reap, editor of the *Albemarle Enterprise*, published a history of the Silver Springs Baptist Church, Tyson Township, Stanly County, North

Carolina. At that time he indicated that Silver Springs had been organized a few years before the Civil War through the efforts of the Reverend David Wright of Troy and that it was one of the first rural Baptist churches in the county. He portrayed the community as being fairly typical of Piedmont North Carolina, with the sturdy, hard-working pioneer settlers coming in to hew their homes out of the wilderness, many times building a small church before they built their own home. Among the first members at Silver Springs were people named Kimrey, Foreman, Mauldin, Turner, Hudson, and Cooper.

A lovely little brick church with four colonial type columns and a steeple, with added Sunday School rooms now provides the community with above average facilities.

John preached only a short time at Anderson's Grove but during that time held a revival meeting at which he baptized 33 persons, received eleven others by letter and restored five. The church was organized through the influence of a Dr. Anderson for whom it was named and who donated the land.

The Ebenezer Church called John about a year before he left Stanly County, and he became acquainted with many of the pioneer settlers and families who now live in what is known as the Badin Community. The name of the church has been changed to Badin, and this town has become the location of one of the largest hydroelectric power plants in North Carolina, and also the largest center of aluminum manufacturing in the state.

While in Stanly County, Brother Suttle was asked to preach a few times at Poplin's Grove, Union Grove, and Sardis, all very small churches at that time. All reported conversions and baptisms while he was there.

A few months before he left Albemarle, Mr. Suttle assisted in the organizing of a Baptist Church at New London and preached there a few times. On one occasion he was spending the night with one of his deacons, Brother

Pickler. This good deacon was one of the finest men in the county and later had a number of sons and grandsons to become brilliant students at Wake Forest College.

Mr. Pickler had one failing. He talked in his sleep. In fact, he did a great many things in his sleep. He fed the geese, fed the cows, fed the hogs, hoed the garden, and did all of the farm chores in his sleep. On the night Brother Suttle stayed with him, Mr. Pickler went right off to sleep and forthwith began his chores. When he proceeded to kick the hogs out of the way, his foot rammed full force into the wall, whereupon he broke his big toe.

Mr. Suttle always was insistent that older people in the church consider seriously the wishes and beliefs of younger children. He tells the story of little Bessie Pickler, six years old, at Albemarle. Little Bessie had come to the mourner's bench with more than a dozen other candidates. She was not crying, mourning, or wringing her hands, but her face was radiant and she told him that she loved the Lord and wanted to be a church member.

When he called for acceptance by the church members of the new list of candidates, he left little Bessie until the very last, then told the congregation, "I didn't leave Bessie until the last because I do not believe in bringing children into the church, but because I wanted you to hear her story". Then he asked Bessie to tell about her belief and her wishes and in a firm clear voice she did so. After the weight of the situation bore down upon her, she broke into tears.

Her statement was convincing and a grisd old church member who had always opposed children coming into the church got up and made this statement: "I have always opposed children's coming into the church because I thought they didn't know what they were doing. I think I have been wrong because I believe what Bessie told us today and I want to make a motion that we accept her into the church". The motion carried unanimously.

John related how twenty years later he visited the same church. He asked the new pastor about Bessie Pickler.

"Oh! Do you know that girl? She is worth at least eight or ten of any other of my church members."

Brother John recalls a member who once traded him a blind cow. In Albemarle in the old days he had to be a farmer as well as a preacher and had to have garden patches, a cow and chickens to be able to support his family. His own cow went dry one summer so he asked this particular deacon if he could find a cow that would give milk. The member said he was glad he asked him about it. He just happened to have the very cow for a preacher's family. She was black, fairly small, muley headed, and would be easy to keep. She was so gentle that even the children could handle her.

That sounded very desirable to Brother John so he walked five miles out in the country leading his own cow to bring back the little black one. After the exchange was made he led the cow the five miles back to Albemarle and noticed along the way that the cow seemed to stumble a little but was willing to follow him. When he got her to the yard she just stood there. She made no effort to eat the green grass. She made no effort to go to the watering trough. When he led her to the stable she ran into the door, then into the wall.

On looking closer, he found she was completely blind. There were no pupils in her eyes.

He was so mad he didn't know what to do. He drove out to the member's house that night and asked him, "Did you know you sold me a blind cow?"

The member replied, "We traded cows Parson, and I don't go back on a trade."

"This is one trade you are going back on or else you or I one will be leaving Stanly County." He made the case so hot that the owner agreed not only to trade back but paid a boy \$5 to lead the cows for the exchange.

On one occasion Brother John remembers he paid \$1.50 for a load of wood that would not burn. The man who sold him the load had agreed to take \$1.50 in cash and to

be given credit for another \$1.50 on the preacher's salary. The wood was wet willow, grown in a swamp and stacked on wet ground and was so soggy, it absolutely would not burn. The town banker heard about the deal and he made things so hot for this man he went out to the forest and got a good load of burnable wood.

In those days it was sometimes necessary for several people to sleep in the same room. A family invited the minister home with them to spend the night. The local pastor had to go back to his home this particular night so John had to go without him. He crawled into the buggy and started out over the dark hills. Finally the horse stopped at what he thought was the barn. It was so dark he could not see very well. The host got out, opened a gate, a very long creaky gate.

They opened the door to a one-room house where the wife, five small children, and two older ones of a neighbor were sleeping. There was a nice clean bed over in one corner. John proceeded to get in because he was very tired. It was one of those hot, sultry nights in July. There were no screens. He was just about to sail off into slumberland when "ping", a big mosquito bit out a chunk of preacher meat. From then on the battle raged. He said each one that came would go back, tell his mother, father, and all of the children, cousins included. "Well, I fought until just about daylight. From sheer exhaustion I fell asleep. When I awoke the sun was shining. The hostess was up, had taken up all of the pallets, made up her bed and was kneading dough. The minute I opened my eyes, she greeted, "Good morning, hope you slept well."

"Yes, thank you," he answered as he reached down to pull up a sheet and wait for her to go out so he could get up and dress. But she was too busy fixing breakfast to let a little thing like that disturb her. So he finally slid out. "I feel sure, though, that she at least turned her head," he said.

A man in Albemarle, M. M. Greene, named his son Suttle Greene. Brother Suttle told him if he reared the

child to manhood he would give him a silver dollar. Eighteen years later while Brother John was preaching at Albemarle, the young man and his father came up and demanded, "Give me a silver dollar. My name is Suttle Greene."

He got the dollar.

V

New Communion Cups In Johnston County

"THE KINGDOM IS COMING"

—*A mighty rock in a weary land*

Isaiah 32:2

Twilight was settling rapidly over the valley of the Neuse River as the Atlantic Coast Line train pulled into Selma late one November afternoon in 1897. Dusk was gathering rapidly, and the surrounding country was already assuming the drabness of early winter.

The little preacher, his young wife, and two-year-old baby were very tired. The train ride from Salisbury had taken all day. It was nerve-wracking and exhausting with the road being rough and the conveniences poor.

The journey was not yet over. It was still four miles to Smithfield and they had to cover the remaining distance with an old hack driver named Charlie Hodge, a crusty old character who claimed he had covered the distance around the world several times in making an endless number of four mile trips between the villages of Selma and Smithfield.

Smithfield was John Suttle's destination. It was the

county seat of Johnston County and the location of the new church he was to serve for the next seven years.

Johnston County was a mission field. There were only four or five Missionary Baptist churches in the entire county, none of them able to suport a full time minister and several of them receiving support from the State Mission Board. There were plenty of Primitive Baptists, a few Methodists and a few scattered Presbyterians; but on the whole, in 1897, Johnston County consisted of wilderness, ignorance, provincialism, bootleggers, roughnecks, mosquitoes, and malaria.

Scattered throughout this hodgepodge of seething backwardness were little groups of very good people, several of whom were trying to establish Missionary Baptist churches. All were located in isolated communities set in a massive expanse of virgin pine timber. Large business interests were rapidly cutting this timber either for lumber or crossties, or were harvesting thousands of barrels of turpentine.

Wages were low and the people were poor by comparison with many other counties farther east or farther west.

Johnston County had been a highway, rich in natural resources, but late to be developed, compared to the sections around New Bern, Wilmington, Raleigh, Durham, and Hillsboro. Many settlers had passed through Johnston but comparatively few had remained.

Clayton, in the extreme northern part of the county, was older and more civilized, being fairly close to the capital at Raleigh. Baptists had established a church there as early as 1811. Smithfield was organized in 1832, Mt. Moriah in 1834, and Bethesda in 1842. Most of the other churches had been established about the time the Civil War broke out or fifteen to twenty years after it closed. This area bore the brunt of Sherman's march from the sea back to the north. There was great destruction and disorganization in this part of the state.

In 1897, the State Mission Board had contacted John

Suttle in Albemarle and asked him to take his youthful energy and organizing ability into Johnston to see if some progress could be accomplished. Mrs. Suttle remembers more of the details of the first few days.

"I will never forget that first carriage ride from Selma to Smithfield. Old Charlie let everybody know he was coming. He had a very musical bugle which he would sound about a mile out of town so that the hotel or whoever was expecting guests had ample time to be ready for them.

"Our first night was spent with the senior deacon of the church, Mr. J. M. Beaty. His family consisted of his wife and mother who did everything possible to make us comfortable. The next day we went over to the parsonage, a very neat five-room cottage entirely large enough for us since we had only two children.

"This parsonage was built near the church. Two of the rooms were actually on the church lot. These two rooms had been built to take care of two maiden sisters who were wards of the church. Later, three more rooms, a front and back porch and a hall were added.

"The church had been built before the Civil War. It was just a plain oblong building with a lot of windows on each side. There was a gallery upstairs for the slaves. One former slave, Aunt Nancy Brown, was still a member of this church when we got there.

"In order to reach the bell and ring it the sexton had to go up a flight of steps from a wide tower, pass through the parsonage yard and reach up high to get the rope. Consequently there were two front gates to the fence around the parsonage; one for the parsonage and one for getting into the church.

"Across the street from the side of the church was the cemetery. I used to hear weird voices down there and was told that it was an old fellow who came to town to get drunk. Then when he wanted to sober up, he went to the cemetery to do so. Courting couples used to walk in the cemetery on Sunday.

"The day after we arrived I remember one old gentleman hitched his horse on the court square to allow him to feed on the grass. He was arrested and fined, then went right back out to the lawn and tied his horse in the same spot. When questioned about why he did this he replied, 'I have paid for my horse's dinner and he is going to get it'."

Smithfield was headquarters for John while he lived in Johnston County but simultaneously he held pastorates at Sardis, Princeton, Pisgah, Four Oaks, Bethesda, Blackmon's Grove, Carter's Chapel, Benson, Hood's Grove and Wilson's Mill. Some of these smaller churches he was able to reach only once a month. Sometimes he would hold the business meeting on Saturday and worship on Sunday.

Since the mighty Neuse River cut the county into two parts, there was plenty of water. Sometimes there was too much water to cross the river bridges. Most of the baptizing took place in Holt's Lake, a large lake southwest of Smithfield on Holt's Creek, a tributary of the Neuse.

The seven years in Johnston County were probably the busiest, hardest, most enervating years of the 65 John spent in the ministry. Except for his youth and vitality he never would have been able to do the traveling and preaching called for on that circuit. Many of the rugged experiences of that period he has told over and over again to all of his other churches in the west.

His name and fame were so lasting that even forty years after he had been away, a new men's class in the Sunday School at Smithfield in 1947 voted to name themselves "Suttle Bible Class". A prominent attorney, Honorable R. E. Batton, is the teacher.

All of the problems at Smithfield did not consist of wilderness and weather. Some of them included people and their ignorance. For instance, most of the churches still used the old-fashion goblets from which they drank wine for the Communion.

These Lord's Supper Cups were usually cracked or

chipped or had become insanitary from long use. Some were metal and others were made of china. They were filled with wine, usually one for the males and one for the females.

At Smithfield the cups were in bad condition. A leading member of the church had proposed that new ones be obtained and said he would pay for them. A leading deacon named Underhill got up and said in church, "If anything besides the old-fashioned cups comes in at the front door of this church, I'll go out the back door."

The congregation did not make any decision on the matter at this time but postponed it to a later date. As it happened, Brother Suttle had been invited to the Underhill home for supper. He slipped into the kitchen before Mr. Underhill came home and arranged with Mrs. Underhill to place him and the host side by side for the evening meal. He also arranged for her to pour only one glass of milk.

Everybody had their regular knives, forks, spoons, and plates on which was placed the usual portions of food, but only one glass of milk. This glass of milk was set half way between him and Mr. Underhill.

Underhill came to the table and sat down in a hurry. "Well, Pastor, this is indeed a surprise. We are so glad to have you for supper. Will you ask the blessing?"

Grace was said and the family proceeded with their supper. Underhill looked around then looked up at his wife and said, "Betsy, where is my milk? I'm thirsty." Whereupon Mr. Suttle took a little drink from the glass between them and said, "Here's your milk." Underhill said, "No, no, that is your milk. I want my milk." But Mr. Suttle again said, "No, this is your milk. I'm drinking out of it and if you don't drink out of it too I won't eat supper with you. In fact, I'm about ready to go out that door right now."

The old farmer, who had a good sense of humor, leaned back and laughed and said, "Well, Brother Suttle, you've got me. You can have your communion cups whenever

you want them because I'm not going to drink milk or wine after nobody."

Before the Suttles arrived in Smithfield, the Baptists were not in the majority as in some other parts of the state. In fact, they were almost in the minority, especially the Missionary Baptists. One of the stories the Suttles first heard on their arrival was the tale about Aunt Susan Crocker.

Aunt Susan was a housekeeper for a well known family named the Carver Masseys. She and the colored member, Aunt Nancy Brown, kept the church clean and would have services whenever possible. However, so many of the members moved away that services were not held regularly, especially in the wintertime. It so happened that a preacher by the name of Dr. Harper, a member of the denomination, Disciples of Christ, came to Smithfield and asked permission to conduct services in the church. Aunt Susan readily consented.

A few Sundays later a neighbor stopped by for Aunt Susan to go to church with her. She was preparing dinner and said she could not go, but when she was told that Dr. Harper had announced the night before he was going to organize a branch of the Disciples Church in their building, Aunt Susan changed her mind and her apron. She went not only to church, but right up into the pulpit and told the preacher he could not organize such a church there.

"This is a Baptist Church, it was built by the Baptist people many, many years ago and we'll find some Baptists to go in it," she told the minister.

Mrs. Suttle was quickly impressed with the fortitude and courage with which some of the women had to face their problems. Men drank a great deal and often in states of drunkenness fought fierce personal battles, sometimes killing each other. One of her neighbors, a Mrs. Hall, had to face such a crisis.

Mrs. Hall was a widow and had a daughter and two small grandchildren who lived with her. One day she

drove to the other end of the big bridge across the Neuse River to get some vegetables, driving her little pony, Trixie, and pulling a small cart. The daughter and grandchildren were in the cart and Mrs. Hall was quite feeble, having had an illness for some time.

The bridge was barely wide enough for two vehicles to pass. After she had gotten on the bridge coming back, she looked up and noticed a wagon coming rather rapidly from the other end. Apparently the mules were running at break-neck speed and the two occupants were standing up in the wagon bed fighting and swearing at each other. Mrs. Hall feared greatly for the safety of her family and did not know exactly what to do.

Making a rather quick decision, she jumped out of the little cart and raced towards the charging mules, unfastening a big black skirt at the same time. She threw the black skirt over the heads of the mules, and they halted temporarily, long enough for her to grab the bridle of one of them.

As the mules halted, the frightened woman jumped quickly into the wagon, grabbed the reins and guided the animals carefully past her little Trixie with the grandchildren crouching in the wagon.

The drunken men scarcely seemed to notice what she had done. One of them did not even offer to strike her with the big black horse whip which he held in his hands.

A few months after Brother Suttle got to Johnston County there was considerable interest among the other denominations as to whether the Baptists soon would take the lead. The Presbyterians began giving out tracts about their denomination. Primitive Baptists and Methodists also began to pass around tracts about their better points.

Two girls of about high school age came to Brother Suttle's office one day and asked him for tracts on the Baptist Church. He went back into the office and got two New Testaments, handing one to each of the girls.

"No, Brother Suttle. You must have misunderstood us.

We don't want Bibles, we want tracts on the denomination." Brother John said, "This explains our denomination better than any tract. I hope you will read it and if it leads you to the Presbyterian Church, that you'll join that church. If it leads you to the Methodist Church, that you will join the Methodist. If after reading this New Testament, you find it leads you to the Baptist Church, I'll be looking for you."

Mr. Suttle reported that later in the year he was conducting a revival meeting with the assistance of Dr. L. R. Pruitt of Charlotte and was not too surprised to see the two girls come in and sit on the front seat for the evening service. Incidentally, they sat down by the Presbyterian minister who had given them tracts on his denomination. After the service was over, they joined the Baptist Church.

Being on time for his regular appointed services is one of the uncompromising virtues of John. When he first went to Smithfield and took a little church out in the county, he found that the customary time to start services was posted at 11:00 o'clock, but no one, not even the visiting ministers, ever started on time. They stood around the church, told stories or talked about politics and had other discussions until about 12:00 o'clock. Then, when all of the stragglers got there, they went into the church and held an hour's service before they went home.

When the new pastor arrived he started the service at 11:00 o'clock and closed on time with only one or two people being present. Then when 12:00 o'clock came and he was on his way home, he met several of the brethren coming in. They said, "Where are you going, Brother Suttle?" He said, "I'm going home. It's dinner time." But they said, "What about the preaching service?"

He said, "We've already had that. We start the service exactly on time here. We begin at 11:00 o'clock. I hope to see you all next Sunday."

From then on members of that church learned that Brother Suttle did start his meetings on time and always had the good grace to close them on time.

In one of the smaller churches not too far from Smithfield he held a revival meeting for a week and was about to go home. One of the deacons suggested that it was not exactly fair that the young preacher come over and spend an entire week with them preaching and teaching without pay.

One of the leading farmers said, "I don't believe we ought to let this man go without helping him and I'm going to ask that everybody give generously." He passed a hat. Out of the entire congregation there was one quarter, which this leading farmer gave, and the rest was pennies, nickels, dimes, making a total of 98 cents, which Brother Suttle pocketed for his entire week's work.

Among merchants of that early time was a general attitude of "let the buyer beware". A member of his church contracted to sell him a barrel of sweet potatoes. On top of the barrel were two layers of fairly good potatoes but from there on down to the very bottom the potatoes were merely scraps and strings.

Mr. Suttle paid him the price for the good potatoes and the next time he saw him told the merchant that he would either give him his money back or deliver a barrel of good potatoes, or in the long run he would pay a lot more than the cost of a barrel of potatoes. Early the next morning a barrel of good potatoes was on his back porch.

On another occasion the only daughter of a wealthy merchant in Smithfield disappeared. Her disappearance caused so much confusion that the school was closed, the mill shut down, the mail did not run, and there was no cooking for a couple of days.

The entire community was organized to find her. The pastor was asked to remain at his church to receive any news and to ring the bell long and loud whenever she was found. After two or three days the little girl came out of the attic where she had been hiding in a trunk and had stored enough provisions for her stay.

"I never had so much fun in my life," the teenage girl said.

As a rule John has been considered a meek, mild, easy-going sort of a person. But, where a principle is involved he is known to be full of fire and temper and on many occasions exercises righteous indignation.

Take the case of the man in Johnston County who thought he would have a little fun at the preacher's expense. While little John's back was turned one day at church this big bully of a man said in a loud voice, "How is it that our little new preacher drives a horse fatter than mine, wears clothes finer than mine, and seems to look so prosperous?"

Brother John wheeled around and said, "I drive a horse fatter than yours because I'm not too stingy to feed him like you are. I wear clothes finer than you do because I have a little more self-respect than you. I am a little more prosperous than you because I give a tenth of all I make to the Lord, and since I have been here you only gave Him this one single dollar bill and I'm giving it back to you right now."

When he stuck it out to the man the bully was so surprised he took it, murmuring apologies all the while. He missed a few Sundays at church but then came back driving a nice horse, wearing his best clothes and from then on contributed generously.

A letter the Suttles have in their possession came from Festus L. Woodall from Route No. 2, Clayton. As a young man he had been baptized in the old Ivey pond along with a good many other young people from the community. He later got an education and became a writer and solicitor for the *Smithfield Herald*, and wrote a weekly column for that newspaper. One of the columns was devoted to Pastor Suttle's work in that section.

"To know John W. Suttle is to love him. To have him in one's home was indeed a pleasant occasion," the columnist stated.

Granny Creech lived at Four Oaks where four large,

beautiful oak trees had grown up together and made a splendid shade for the little church building.

Four Oaks was just a village sixty years ago with only two to three hundred persons making the total population. The Atlantic Coast Line Railroad had one train which stopped there daily. Most of the people were farmers, chiefly raising tobacco.

Why they called Mrs. Laura Creech "Granny" no one knew. She was far too young and too pretty to be given the title "Granny". Perhaps it was because she had reared a large family of boys and girls and because she was so mature in her attitude toward her church.

When John took the church at Four Oaks in 1900, it had only one member and that was Granny Creech. The others had married, died, quit, or moved away. Mrs. Creech always said his coming was a direct answer to prayer, for she had tried very hard not to be the only member left.

"I've tried to keep the building in order, Pastor, and I spend some time every week sweeping and dusting it. I come out here every day and get down on my knees and ask God to send us a preacher."

For several services the new pastor and Granny Creech were the only members present and when they would sing a song he would call the number and she would play the organ and sing. When the Lord's Supper was served John would have to hand her the bread and wine and then she would pass it back to him. Eventually others joined the church and the congregation grew, but they could not interest one son who was fond of fishing. John told him he liked to fish, too, so son Jim Creech invited the pastor to go with him several times.

Once a big fish got away. He told John afterwards that he would have been surprised to have heard what would have been said if the preacher had not been there. Finally on one particular trip he turned to John and said, "Brother John, are you fishing for fish or are you fishing for me?"

John said, "You."

"Well," the man said, "you have caught me."

They headed into a cove and had a long talk then went home to tell his mother. She was one of the happiest women in the community and it is said that she could be heard shouting all over the neighborhood.

After a number of years she passed on to her reward, and her good deeds, her unselfishness and thoughtfulness were talked about for many days in the church. One of her neighbors, a Methodist woman, was asked to say a few words at the funeral and gave a wonderful account of her usefulness.

Brother John says, "Many times I have used the illustration of Mrs. Laura Creech to try to stress the importance of church attendance even though the crowd is small, because despite the lack of church organization, she came to church every Sunday, to prayer meeting, to Sunday School, and to Worship Service. In addition, she was the sexton, the clerk, the organist, and all the officers of the church. The church survived because of her faith. Her son put a memorial window in the Four Oaks Church where a new building now stands, but the real memorial of Granny Creech is in the hearts of the people in that community."

Over at Pisgah the church needed a new sanctuary. Most of the members were tenant farmers, very poor, and could give only of their labor. This they were willing to do but they had no money or timber.

One of the members of the church, however, was quite wealthy, owned a great deal of land and a stand of the finest timber in the entire country. Members of the church asked him if he would donate enough timber to frame the building, with the members doing the work themselves. He refused.

They went to him a second time and he refused again. The very next day a cyclone dipped down into that section of Johnston County and ripped through that fine stand of timber.

"That wind in five minutes destroyed enough good timber in that one forest to build ten churches," said Brother John. He dutifully pointed this fact out to the owner who in great repentance let the members not only salvage the fallen trees but get whatever was necessary from those still standing.

John has told his churches over and over again, "We had better give the Lord a tenth of our income and other gifts that are due Him. If not, He'll get it one way or another."

In one of the smaller churches in that area, Brother John had a deacon named Jones. Deacon Jones always wanted to pray in revival meetings. He prayed so earnestly and so convincingly for the lost that usually if that person was present he would come to the mourner's bench.

One night he began to pray for his own son. His son was sitting next to him, and he was also next to a window. As the prayer waxed and waned and became more eloquent, his son raised the window next to him and jumped out of the church.

One deacon at Bethesda always sang when the collection plate was being passed. Invariably he would sing whether the others sang or not. Almost as invariably when the collection plate passed him he would close his eyes. The usher would usually pass him by and let it go at that. However, one day Brother John decided to intervene and told the usher to stop and stand there until the deacon opened his eyes. This singing deacon haltingly opened his eyes, saw the plate, and closed them again. Lo and behold, when he opened them again the plate was still there.

Brother John openly told him that the collection plate was something to put money in and that the usher had been instructed to stand there until he put some money in it. Mr. Deacon put in some money and from that time on put money in the plate every time it was passed.

One of the truly rewarding experiences of Brother John

in Johnston County was the organization of a new church. It was organized on Thanksgiving Day and on his suggestion, the members called it Thanksgiving Church. That is what it is known as to this day. A few years ago it was moved from its original location on a dirt road to a hard surfaced road between Clayton and Wilson where it sits on a beautiful hilltop. The grounds consist of several acres of beautifully landscaped terrain which was donated by Dr. R. E. Earp, one of the early members.

This church has been quite successful in developing the Lord's Acre plan and the "harvest day festival" by which a part of the financial obligations of the church are met.

Another accomplishment was the efforts he made in the establishment of a new Association. In the year 1903, a number of the churches in Johnston County which had been members of the Raleigh Association decided they needed a new one closer home, so the Johnston Association was organized. The first meeting was held at Selma with the Reverend R. H. Gower, moderator and T. J. Lassiter, clerk. Dr. Livingston Johnson preached the first sermon, and Brother Suttle preached the sermon the second year in 1904.

Memberships and financial contributions were pitifully small at the beginning of the 20th century. For instance in 1898, John's five churches at Smithfield, Sardis, Princeton, Pisgah, and Four Oaks, contributed a total of less than \$400 for the entire year. However, this was from a membership of only around 400 in all. One hopeful thing was that at Princeton the first year, John was able to baptize 54 persons.

Both memberships and contributions grew with the succeeding years. By the last two years of his stay his membership was several hundred persons larger and was contributing over \$2,000.

In 1954 upon his retirement, Brother John looked with pride in the minutes of the Johnston Baptist Association and hurriedly checked the list to find the churches he once served now have a total membership of more than 4,000

persons, and that the total contributions for all causes were in excess of \$150,000.

“Truly when God said, ‘Cast your bread upon the water and after many days it will return unto you,’ He knew exactly what He was talking about,” John said.

“He must have meant Johnston County.”

VI

John Barleycorn Gets Whipped In Marshall

"JESUS, LOVER OF MY SOUL"

I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills.

Psalm 121:1

The fighting parson of Johnston County was tired.

What the bootleggers, saloon keepers, wholesale liquor dealers, the drunkards and gutter rats of Johnston County had not been able to do, the *Anopheles* mosquito had succeeded in doing.

Mrs. Mosquito gave John malaria.

Day after day and week after week during the summer of 1907 the chills, fever, and sweats of tertian malaria wracked and almost wrecked John's already frail body. Never a man of robust physique, he weighed only 100 pounds when he contracted malaria, and during the course of the summer his weight dropped to around 85 pounds.

He took quinine by the handfuls and managed to keep going for his appointments and special meetings. The fever continued to plague him to such an extent that he lost strength, lost sleep, lost everything except the desire to lie down and rest a long, long time.

The offer came to go to Marshall in the hills of Madison in the French Broad Association. He knew there was much work to do in Johnston County, that he had only begun to fight to stamp out the liquor traffic and to establish respect for law and human lives in that frontier, but he was so tired he could hardly raise his voice above a whisper. He took the Marshall call, having in mind to free his body of malaria and get a long desired rest.

He and his family established themselves in a fine old colonial type house overlooking a magnificent view of the French Broad valley. During the fall and winter of 1907, he was able to rest and recuperate a great deal of the strength he had lost. He had a little time for hunting and fishing, and the climate beyond the Blue Ridge was stimulating to his appetite and ambition.

While pastor at Marshall, John was supplying for a smaller church, Madison Seminary, several miles away from the county seat where he lived.

If he thought his battle against alcohol and for state-wide prohibition was over when he left Johnston County, he was mistaken. He had fought and whipped the advocates of alcohol in Johnston, and by the spring of 1908 a state-wide campaign for the abolition of alcoholic beverages was under way. There was strong sentiment in Madison County for both sides, but prohibitionists were in the lead. Taking their cue from John Suttle's success in the east, they decided to put on a really big campaign for prohibition. John was asked to make plans for a county-wide rally one Sunday in May. He asked a prominent young lawyer of Shelby, Oliver Max Gardner, to drive up to Marshall to speak.

Gardner was just beginning a very brilliant career in the law profession and in state politics; a career which was to dominate the state for the next forty years. Mrs. Suttle recalls the occasion. "I never saw Cousin Max dressed up so well. The previous November he had married Miss Faye Webb and had purchased a Prince Albert

suit with long tails and striped trousers. His head was adorned by a high black silk topper.

"He felt that if he was to speak in a pulpit, even though it was Cousin John's pulpit, he should wear a long coat. As hot as the weather was, he donned his heavy Prince Albert suit to make a fiery, rational, very impressive and convincing temperance speech. With so many clothes on and such a big crowd of people in the church, Max said he almost smothered.

"However, his speech was so good and the people were enthused to such interest in the campaign that only one vote was cast against prohibition in Madison County that year," said Mrs. Suttle.

The haven in the hills was good for John. His health was restored. His soul reclaimed his body. By midwinter of the second year in Madison he was ready to fight sin, John Barleycorn, or the Devil himself.

He would fight on level ground. A call came from Cleveland County and the odyssey was over. Brother John came home to stay.

VII

How Dessert Was Found In South Shelby

"BREAK THOU THE BREAD OF LIFE."

. . . And ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.

Acts 1:8

In 1909, the little county seat town of Shelby was bursting at the seams. Country people were moving to town, the cotton mills were expanding their operations, and textile villages were springing up in the cotton fields on the outer edges of the community.

Leaders of the Shelby First Baptist Church began to look around. They saw the need for another church. One was needed especially at South Shelby. They laid their plans and decided to call it the Shelby Second Baptist Church.

John Suttle was contacted at Marshall where he had just about recuperated from the onslaught of malaria, and it was agreed that he would come back home and join in an effort to organize the church at South Shelby. On January 1, 1909, he began his work.

The efforts to found a Second Baptist Church was no small problem. Not too many people were anxious to be a member of a "second" Baptist church. However, there

was a genuine need for service to the people in that community. For six years Brother John labored and shared the sacrifices and joys of a struggling group of people who were willing to found a church away from the security of the stronger, more powerful First Church.

In 1949, when the church celebrated its 40th Anniversary, he and other pastors who were still living were invited for a gala celebration. One of the other ministers was the Reverend L. L. Jessup, now a prominent minister in Virginia, and under whose leadership the Second Baptist Church made its greatest strides in membership and progress.

Dr. Zeno Wall, pastor of the First Baptist Church for 23 years, often came to South Shelby to assist John in the meeting. On some of these occasions they would go into the homes of many of the members and partake of dinner. John said he and Dr. Wall had a little plan worked out by which they could notify each other if they saw signs of dessert coming on.

If it looked as though there would be a dessert, they would not eat as much of the regular meal. If there was to be no dessert, they would ask for a second helping. The prearranged signal was a kick on the leg under the table.

At this particular house one day, Dr. Zeno thought he saw two signs of dessert. He could just barely see around the corner into the kitchen. One sign was a big pan setting on the table with a spoon handle sticking out. He thought this was blackberry pie. The other was a barrel underneath the table which he took to be an ice cream freezer with a dipper handle sticking out of the churn. He gave Brother Suttle a resounding kick on the shin.

However, in a few minutes the host announced that the meal was over and that they had just as well go out into the yard and smoke or have a chew of tobacco.

The two ministers discovered to their amazement that the pan on the table was not blackberry pie but a pan of dish water, and that the supposed ice cream churn on the

floor was not ice cream but a keg of molasses. A wiser and sadder pair abandoned their signs and designs on desserts. From then on they ate regular meals like everybody else.

The same year Suttle organized the church at South Shelby he was called to New Hope in the little village of Earl on the Southern Railroad about six miles south of Shelby. He kept this pastorate until 1916.

One of the things about the Earl Community which Mr. Suttle remembers was the Bettis store which, in that day and time, was a really old-fashioned country type of store. They had everything from the proverbial cracker barrel to Sunday suits. They sold coal oil for the farmers and stick candy for the children; high button shoes for the women and "brogans" for the men.

Sam H. Austell, one of the charter members of this church, is still living and still drives his Model "A" car even though he is above the age of 93 years. "Uncle" Billy Earl, for whom the Town of Earl was named, was clerk of the church at that time. He was very proud of the fact that he had the longest and handsomest beard in Cleveland County and wore it that way until his death a year or so ago.

When Brother Suttle was pastor at New Hope one of his deacons, L. M. Hopper, fell off the church while making some repairs and broke his leg. Eventually it had to be amputated.

On the same circuit as South Shelby and New Hope is old Zoar, located on what is now Highway 18 south of Shelby about three miles. Zoar is the church where the Kings Mountain Association first decided to establish a school for young ministers at the little town of Boiling Springs six miles west. Zoar was constituted in 1837 and is one of the oldest churches in the county, along with Zion, Sandy Run and old Capernaum.

The oldest church Brother John has pastored is Sandy Run. This ancient church, mother of all churches in the

Sandy Run Association and most of the churches in the Kings Mountain Association, was organized in the year 1772, four years before the signing of the Declaration of Independence.

He became pastor of this church in 1912 and drove the ten miles from Shelby to Mooresboro once a month for preaching and the Saturday before for the regular meeting. At Sandy Run, John Suttle followed nearly all the dream preachers of his boyhood, because it was here that old Drury Dobbins had served for 44 years from 1803 to 1847. Also, his grandfather, Joseph Suttle, had been pastor in 1854 before the Civil War, as well as J. S. Ezell, G. W. Rollins, Thomas Dixon, J. H. Yarborough, A. C. Irvin, and Z. D. Harrill.

Records of the church for the first ten years have been lost, but there are permanent records dating back to 1782. There are several names of slaves recorded as being members of the church, and offerings at that time were made in the coin of the realm, pence and shillings.

Sandy Run was first a member of the Bethel Association and later in 1800 joined the Broad River Association. Tradition says that Broad River Association, one of the oldest in upper South Carolina, was organized at Sandy Run Church.

Buildings are known to have been erected originally in 1772 then again in 1804, 1835, 1871, 1908, and lastly in 1949. One of the finest, most modern church and Sunday School plants in rural Piedmont Carolina now houses Sandy Run Church. John Suttle had no little part in stimulating the people of Sandy Run to erect this kind of meeting house. His eight years of preaching, teaching, and talking about the new Sunday School methods paid off when the new building was erected.

When Brother John was at Sandy Run he had been preaching long enough to know what he wanted to do and how to do it.

Three men, a Mr. Martin, a Mr. Lovelace, and a Mr. Bridges, always went to sleep. They were faithful to at-

tend. They sat in the "Amen" corner, and they made their regular contributions, but while the pastor was preaching they always went to sleep.

One morning when Brother Suttle noticed that they had slipped into peaceful slumber, he quit preaching. He stopped thirty seconds, a minute, and just kept waiting and waiting to see if they would wake up. Everybody in the congregation began to be restless and to look at the three men wondering what was going to happen when suddenly:

"BANG!"

The three men woke up and looked around very much startled. Brother Suttle pointed his finger at them. "You three men have been asleep every Sunday since I have been preaching at this church. If you ever go to sleep again while I'm in the pulpit, I'm going to ——— all of you."

All three of the men professed to be so mad they wanted to do something about it, but they did not, and as long as Brother Suttle stayed at Sandy Run, not only those three men, but no one else ever, ever went to sleep again.

One other interesting occurrence at Sandy Run was at a baptizing. Brother Suttle was going to baptize a very timid little girl. He came fairly early to inspect the pool and while inspecting, along with some of the deacons, he found that thirty-eight water moccasins had been killed a few moments before by some of the deacons; that is, one Mama water moccasin and 37 little ones. They were all piled up in a neat pile and some of them were still wiggling and writhing.

Hurriedly the snake pile was removed from the scene and soon after that the timid little girl presented herself to the preacher for baptism. As soon as Brother Suttle stood in the pool before the candidate, a little twig down in the water began to play around the calf of his leg so he blurted out hurriedly, "I baptize thee in the name of the ——— SPLASH!" and under went the candidate and

out came the preacher and the little girl. The power of suggestion was too strong, even for a preacher!

Brother John went to Waco in 1916 and for the first time hit his true stride as a country pastor. Waco made the sixth church in his circuit. He already was obligated at New Bethel, Lawndale, Double Shoals, Zoar and New Hope.

From that time forward for twenty-eight years, he would be pastor of either six or seven churches and for 32 years pastor of five churches, all at the same time!

Waco was at the extreme eastern edge of Cleveland County, being near the edge of the Gaston County line about ten miles from Shelby. He drove for the first few years in his usual horse drawn buggy, but by 1918, his automobile afforded him much easier transportation.

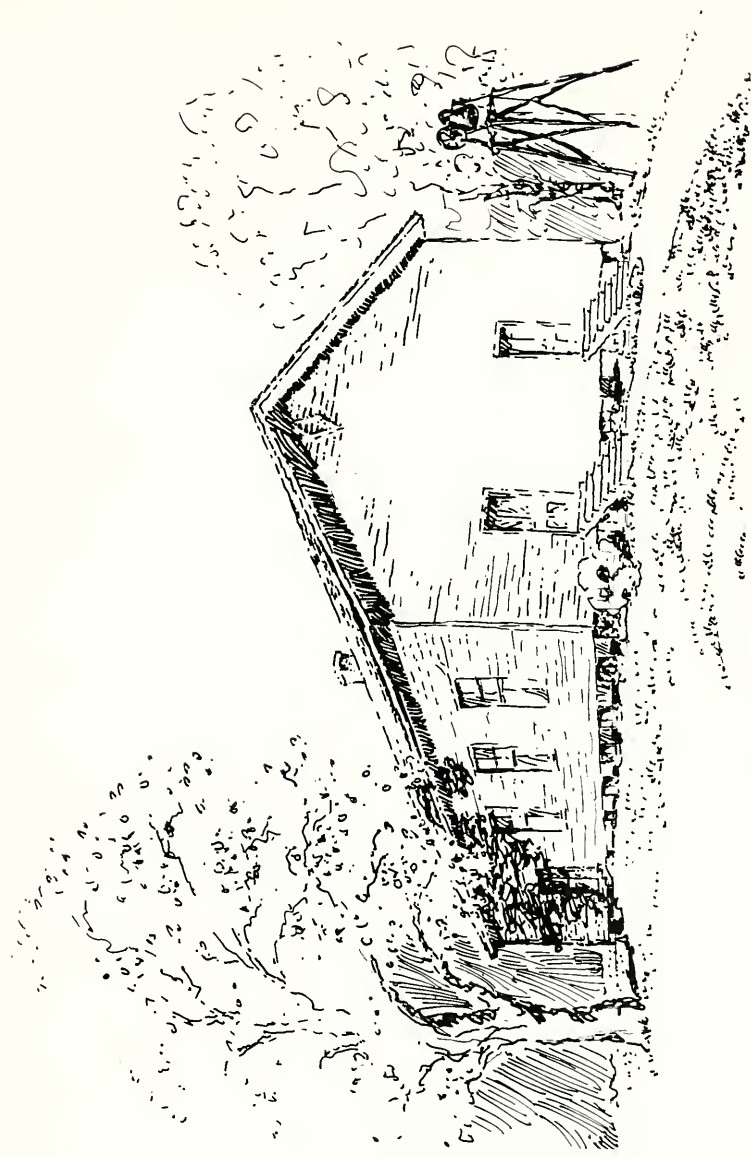
Waco is an old community. The original church was established under the name Capernaum about a mile and a half from the present village of Waco. When the church was organized there the worshippers met under a brush arbor and their cemetery is still there. Once a year a memorial service is held at the cemetery.

At Waco, John Suttle's pattern was the same. It was preaching, enlistment, stewardship, come to church, train the deacons, train the teachers, build a new building, do something more for the Lord.

The people at Waco responded. They enrolled, they enlisted, they grew, they studied, they built a new building just as others had done in many of Suttle's other churches and just as they will do in any church in the Southern Baptist Convention with the right leadership.

Brother John remained at Waco for 23 years but one year the rumor got around that the pastor would not be back next year. It so happened that this rumor came to the chairman of the Board of Deacons and some other friends. On one of the Sundays he was not preaching, a very interesting resolution was passed.

"First, that the Reverend J. W. Suttle remain as our pastor. Second, that steps be taken at once to make a



Double Springs Baptist Church, 1917
(sketch from memory)

thorough every-member canvass of the church in order that we may have something definite to base our plans on for the coming year. Third, assuring you of our love, sympathy, cooperation and prayers, that we appreciate your sane counsel and wise leadership more than we can express and trust that you will lead us in the greater fields of usefulness and service. We are:"—and this message was signed by W. M. Harrelson, S. L. Dellinger, John Wacaster, D. B. Stroup, J. F. Moss, P. J. Kendrick, and A. W. Black.

He ended his ministry at Waco in 1938, but has been called back on many occasions to take part in special services, one of the most prominent being the celebration of the 100th Anniversary of the church in 1942.

A comparatively new church, Patterson Grove, called Brother John in 1931 and he remained with this church in the extreme northeast part of the county through the year 1944.

Patterson was the community once called Sandy Plains due to the broad flat sandy fields in that community. The church had been organized in 1884 with 72 members, most of whom came from an older church at Bethlehem which John had pastored previously.

Patterson Grove was just what Brother John was looking for. Again he went into a community that was isolated from its neighbors, with very poor roads, no telephones, but a willing people. He proved again that a plan and a pattern is all that is needed to transform a backward community into a prosperous, thriving, energetic, interesting group of workers. The church grew in all respects and by 1944, when he resigned, it was at the very top, compared with any other rural church in the Association.

Although this community had been isolated by lack of transportation and communication some of the county's hardest pioneer settlers had made their homes there. Among these were the Pattersons, Falls, Grahams, Har-

mons, Goforths, Scisms, Elams, Barbours, Randalls, and others.

One of Brother Suttle's former friends and associates, the Reverend G. P. Hamrick, had been pastor at Patterson Grove for a long while and had told him some interesting stories about this place.

At one of the usual summer baptizings some of the tall grass had been cut around the pool built in the little stream not far from the church. The grass had fallen onto the water and a young man who wished to go to the other side thought the grass was on the ground. He stepped on the grass and into the water he went, causing a big splash during the baptismal service.

Brother Hamrick told another story about one of his members, John E. Hardin, who once spanked a little boy. It so happened that Mr. Hardin was plowing and a small Negro boy was cutting and burning sprouts. The boy decided to play a joke on Mr. Hardin. He put the mattock blade in the fire while Mr. Hardin was making a round. Just before Mr. Hardin got back to the place the boy was cutting sprouts, the boy pulled the mattock out of the fire and started digging.

"I've been sproutin' these sprouts so fast dat dis mattic done got hot. Jest feel de blade," said the boy.

Mr. Hardin felt the blade but when it burned his hand, he picked up a sprout and warmed the boy.

In 1909 and 1910 and again in 1915, Brother John was pastor at Bethlehem in the vicinity of Kings Mountain. But at that time, before the advent of transportation by automobile, it was almost impossible to make all of the services, and he relinquished his work for churches closer by.

He served Elizabeth in 1911 and 1912 and Poplar Springs for one year in 1909. He led the organization and was the first pastor at Shelby Eastside in 1921 and of Shelby Dover in 1924, but since these two churches were

so close to Shelby he soon relinquished their leadership and got back to his first love, the country church.

The first time John W. Suttle ever went into a pulpit was at Ross Grove at the age of sixteen where he supplied for Elder Tom Dixon. In his sermon he used the text, "The Wages of Sin is Death, but the Gift of God is Eternal Life Through Jesus Christ Our Lord." When he first spoke the occasion was the Wednesday evening service of a week-long annual revival.

Sixty-five years later he spoke again on the same text at a Wednesday evening Prayer Service. A week before this service, he sent word to the congregation to "Come out and hear me and see if I have improved any on my sermon."

It turned out that no one was present who was there for the original meeting. In fact, there was only one person living in the community old enough to have attended the service. This was Mr. Tom Dedmon and he said that he may have attended but if so, he did not remember it.

VIII

Why The Big Horse Was Called Fred

"HOW FIRM A FOUNDATION."

*I have planted, Apollos watered
but God gave the increase.*

I Corinthians 3:6

John Suttle's experiences as pastor at New Bethel, Lawndale, and Double Shoals are grouped together because it is a part of the same story. These three communities are almost one community. Lawndale is a compact little village in the valley of the First Broad River, and its residents for the past three-quarters of a century have been concerned with operating the textile enterprise of the Schenck family. New Bethel is the community just east of Lawndale on the east plateau of the river, and Double Shoals occupies a similar position on the west plateau.

John was called to New Bethel and Lawndale in the fall of 1913, and in the fall of 1915, became pastor at Double Shoals. His grandfather, Elder Joseph Suttle, had been one of the founders of New Bethel in 1848 and was pastor of this church at the time of his untimely death in the spring of 1860.

The church at Lawndale was a "Union" church. That

is, although organized as a Baptist Church in 1899, it had an indefinite denominational status. This was thought in the beginning to be necessary since a great number of the villagers who lived there and worked in the textile plants were members of other denominations. They wanted to go to church but they did not want to go to a "Baptist" church. Baptists did not want to go to a Methodist church and neither Methodists nor Baptists wanted a Presbyterian church. So the Lawndale Church was a compromise for many years.

New Bethel was one of the most progressive of the rural churches in the Association at the turn of the century. It was the home church of the Beams, Dixons, Clines, Falls, Elams, Carpenters, Griggs, Hords, Lattimores, and other families who have been prominent in the religious, social, civic, and legal life of Cleveland County.

This community was the home of Piedmont Academy, which was Cleveland's first effort at higher education and became the alma mater of a great number of professional leaders in the county today. The Reverend W. D. Burns, Principal, and other members of the faculty of that small academy left an unmistakable stamp of culture and refinement upon that community. Although Piedmont had to close its doors with the advent of state-built, tax-paid high schools, and though the Baptists built their school at Boiling Springs, the influence of the little academy was to be felt for at least two generations after it closed in 1926.

Brother John continued as pastor of this church for 36 years, ending his ministry there in the fall of 1948 when New Bethel celebrated its centennial anniversary.

What Suttle did as pastor at New Bethel was the same

he had been able to do at Waco, Double Springs, Beaver Dam, and all of the other churches where he stayed a while. He led in the erection of a new sanctuary and Sunday School plant in 1924. The members insisted that he be chairman of the building committee and build it "just as good as the one you have at Double Springs."

He emphasized all of the organizations of the church, including missions, evangelism, enlistment, study and training. His methods paid off in growth, cooperation, and usefulness just as they did at other churches.

New Bethel already had a good reputation for Biblical type stewardship when Suttle arrived. For many years the church's custom had been to give sixty per cent to Missions and retain forty per cent for local expenses. Even though local expenses in all of the churches of the Association showed a disproportionate rise when compared to benevolence, New Bethel has been able to maintain an approximately fifty to fifty relationship.

One notable member of this old church left his entire estate, including a large farm, to be administered as a trust by New Bethel, known as the Matt London Fund. Over the years revenues from this trust have assisted young ministers to go on to college, supported missionaries in the field, and added to the endowment of Gardner-Webb College. At the centennial in 1948, the church was able to show hundreds of visitors a thoroughly reconditioned, remodeled and enlarged sanctuary and educational plant which had been done according to suggestions by the architect division of the Sunday School Board. Pastor Suttle and his family were honored and showered with gifts upon his retirement.

Several little things will always tie John's heart to New

Bethel. Among them is a poem by J. D. S. Carpenter who was Sunday School Superintendent for nearly a quarter of a century. One Christmas he gave him a box which contained the following doggerel:

TO MY BELOVED PASTOR

Don't be misled by the name on the box.
We know this is the season for "ties and sox",
After all is done and said
We also know the preacher must be fed,
So this little box of small arms ammunitions
We give for the preacher and all relations.
We hope it don't upset your stomach or liver
But that you may enjoy it as much as the giver.
May the Yuletide days be filled with joy and peace
And throughout the New Year days may it never cease.
May there be no clouds to obscure the sun
But may your path grow brighter and brighter,
Till your race is run.

Another poem which was later set to music and copyrighted by C. P. Gardner, an old-time music school teacher, was entitled "Shadows". It was published in 1936 by the Stamps-Baxter Music Company in a book called *Glory Dawn*.

One of John's members at New Bethel was John Falls, quite rural in both actions and speech. One day Mr. Falls was walking down the street in Gastonia accompanied by his friend, C. P. Gardner. They passed a barber shop and spied a barber who had an abnormally large head that was also bald and egg shaped. Said Falls, "See that man yonder. He's got two yellars in his head."

Diplomacy and persistence paid off in the case of John's service to the Lawndale Church. For many, many years after 1913, he preached in this little "Union" church only once a month. He preached the gospel and stuck closely to the Scriptures, being very careful not to offend the members of other denominations. From time to time, ministers from other denominations were invited. Converts who wanted to be baptized the Baptist way were immersed. If they wanted to be baptized like Methodists, John let

them go to nearby Methodist churches to be sprinkled. However, by the year 1952, there was such a predominance of Baptist inclined members in the Lawndale Church, it was decided to constitute it as a full-fledged Baptist Church.

At the same time as the village grew, there had been an increasing number of Methodists in the membership. They, too, wanted a church of their own and under the leadership of Methodists at nearby Palmtree and financial assistance from the district, the Methodists provided a church building for their congregation and the Baptists a new building for theirs. Thus, without a fight or squabble and with a minimum of misunderstanding or dissension Lawndale got two strong Protestant churches.

Mrs. Suttle has one recollection of Lawndale which she will never forget. It was the summer of 1916 when three weeks of floods had made a raging torrent of First Broad River.

"We were living in Lawndale at the time in a nice home which had been provided by Major Schenck, and which was located on the east side of the river. John had to go across the river to catch a train to make a preaching appointment. Everybody knew the river was high but did not dream what it would do.

"I carried John to the railway station and on the way back home had to cross the river again. Just as I drove the horse off the east end of the bridge, there was a creaking and tearing. To my horror I looked around and saw the bridge pulling away from its mooring to go down the river.

"Not only that bridge but practically all of the other bridges over Broad River between Casar and Shelby were washed away. John was marooned for several days and when he did get to come home, he had to cross over in a boat."

Double Shoals is the locale of one of the most famous

of the hundreds of John Suttle stories. It has been told over and over again using different people and different places, but it usually goes something like this:

A little boy at Double Shoals swallowed a dime. "Call a doctor at once," someone advised.

An interested friend interrupted with, "Oh, no. It won't be necessary to call a doctor. Call your pastor, Reverend John Suttle. He can get money out of the little fellow if anybody can."

On another occasion early in 1916, Brother John was driving a big bay horse called Fred. In an informal gathering before the service one day, Suttle asked some of the deacons gathered in the church yard why they thought he called his horse Fred. Not a one of them knew. Finally one man asked him why. Said John, "I call him Fred because that's his name."

Double Shoals was in the circuit John made each week or twice a month, as the case demanded, in making trips to New Bethel and Lawndale.

As in the case of Lawndale, members of his church were mainly farmers, but some earned a living working in a textile mill at Double Shoals. The church took its name from the fact that there were two shoals not far apart in Broad River over which the river could be forded except at flood stage.

As he had led other churches to do, he led Double Shoals in erecting a building in 1924; in teaching, training, and organizing for more efficient and productive church work. Three young ministers answered the call during his period of leadership. They were J. W. Costner, Leland Royster, and L. B. Scism.

Even though the community was rural and strictly isolated with poor roads and few telephones, Pastor Suttle stuck with them for 32 years and they with him in building an almost ideal rural community.

The Reverend C. O. Greene, who for a number of years has been pastor of the New Bethel, Lawndale, Double Shoals triangle says, "I thought I knew Brother Suttle

pretty well, but I didn't know him at all until I had followed his footsteps in these three communities and found how wonderful it was to build on the foundations he laid."

IX

Double Standards Are Raised At Double Springs

"TRUST, TRY AND PROVE ME."

*He leadeth me
beside the still waters.*

Psalm 23:2

It was Thanksgiving Day in 1918, and with the Great War over, the boys would come home. There was so much for which to be thankful.

John was on his way to Double Springs, his newest pastorate; also, it was the birthplace of the Kings Mountain Association and former church home of both his parents and grandparents.

"The weather is a little bad," mused John as he rode along the muddy road which paralleled the Southern Railway. "Ought to be a big crowd, though," he thought, "since farmers can't work in the fields. I know the meeting was announced."

About two miles from the church he passed the homes of four members whose names began with the initials "J. L.". They were J. L. (James Lewis) Hamrick; J. L. (John Leonard) McSwain; J. L. (Jimmy) Hawkins, and J. L. (Jimmy Lane) Greene. "I don't see a 'J. L.' in sight," he observed.

About a mile from the church he passed Washburn Switch, a little spur on the railroad. Several farmers were feeding the hogs or watering stock, but no one was on the road to church. "These folks are going to be late," he shrugged to himself.

Finally he arrived at the church and no one was there. He rang the bell, but no one came. The hour was over and still no one had come. Heavy hearted, he drove the eight miles back to Shelby.

For 37 years he never let the members at Double Springs forget missing that Thanksgiving service. He rubbed it in every Sunday for the next year; annually from then on. "You could tend the crops and animals the Lord gave you. Looks like you could come to Him one hour in a year to say 'Thank You'," he chided them.

The story of Double Springs is the heart of this book. What John Suttle did there in 37 years as pastor and what the church did under his leadership is the crowning glory of his career as a rural pastor.

Double Springs's record from 1918 to the present day is a saga seldom equalled in Southern Baptist annals so far as building a church is concerned, uniting a community's multiple interests in a church, teaching the Bible, training the young people, and making the church a community center.

This little church did more than to be one of the first rural churches in the South to have a Standard Sunday School in the early 20's. It went on to win and maintain the Advanced Standard for Sunday Schools, which achievement was thought to be impossible in a rural church at that time.

However, nothing was impossible in a church where John Suttle was pastor, where J. N. Barnette was Sunday School Superintendent, and people were as intelligent and eager to learn as they were at Double Springs after World War I.

This little church was not greatly different from other

churches in the Association at that time. It had taken its name from two springs located about fifty feet apart on the banks of a small stream, a tributary of Brushy Creek. Around these springs since the middle 40's of the previous century, a few settlers had gathered with their families, slaves and livestock to hold camp meetings.

The slaves and livestock drank from the smaller spring while the white people drank from the larger one. When time for the service came, they gathered under a brush arbor near by and heard ministers like Elder Drury Dobbins and Elder Lewis McCurry preach the Gospel from two to five hours at a time.

When John Suttle accepted the call in the early fall of 1918, World War I was still under way. A number of young men from the community were away in Army camps or already overseas. No one knew when the fighting would stop. Then came November 11 and armistice.

No one suspected that a world-wide epidemic of influenza would take a much greater toll in lives and suffering than did the Kaiser's imperial forces. Double Springs was hit hard by the "flu". The winter was cold, roads were quagmires, and the pinch of a war economy was felt keenly. Farmers could get no sugar or coffee except a crumbly type of brown sugar and a very cheap brand of coffee which was half chicory.

However, farm prices were good and no one grumbled at the hardships. "What we do without, will go to the soldier boys," they said.

Uncle Berry Hamrick had died the year before at the age of 97. For years Mr. Suttle had known this venerable old patriarch, best known leader of the Hamrick generations in Cleveland and Rutherford counties, a direct descendant of the original George Hamrick who came from Germany in 1731.

Uncle Berry had lived in the community before there was a church at Double Springs and before there was a Kings Mountain Association. John had known him inti-

mately and had talked with him on many occasions about the old days; especially of remembrances of grandfather Joseph Suttle who once had been pastor at Double Springs.

In his prime, Uncle Berry was the champion of everything. He lived the longest, told the best stories, had the most wives (three in number), and had the most descendants of any man in the community.

However, his greatest claim to fame was his ability to pull fodder. His long arms and nimble fingers could race up and down a stalk of corn, shear off the blades of fodder, and pack them together in small bundles called "hands". He was so adept with this skill and had such strength and endurance that no one for miles around would try to beat him. On one occasion a young man who thought he was pretty good challenged Uncle Berry.

"If I don't beat that old man to the end of this row, I'll leave the field," said the young braggart. When they finished the long row of pulling and tying the fodder, Uncle Berry was twenty steps ahead of his nearest opponent. Whereupon the young man left the field shaking his head in wonder and amazement. "I don't see how a man that old can work so fast!"

Another man in the community who first attracted Mr. Suttle's attention was J. B. Hawkins. This old gentleman was called upon time and time again for special prayers. If it was too hot he was called upon to pray for cooler weather; if too cold, to pray for warmer weather. If there was a drought, Uncle Jimmy was asked to pray for rain. He was also asked to pray for the sick or ask the Lord to stop the war. His prayers were very long, very beautiful, very earnest, and always effective.

Mr. Hawkins' son, J. L., still lives in Shelby and is one of the few people in Cleveland County older than John Suttle.

W. W. Washburn, known widely as "Uncle Wins", was superintendent of the Sunday School. He was also a deacon and trustee of the Baptist High School at Boiling Springs. His hobby was beautifying the church grounds.

Year in and year out he would plant trees, various kinds of shrubbery, and would cultivate and water them from one season to another.

George Hamrick was the church treasurer. He was known as one of the best farmers in the community as well as a very successful business man. He made a special effort to see that everybody paid a little and that every penny which came to the church treasury was spent or distributed properly.

Preaching the Gospel in a simple rural community is not always without its dangers, and the spring of 1919 brought an incident which tested John's faith.

The congregation was still occupying the old church building which had a raised platform at the north end with windows on either side. The spring morning was warm and languid, and someone had lifted the window back of him in order to get a little fresh air. Over the window sill just back of the parson, furtively yet noiselessly, peered the head of a large blacksnake. Mr. Snake poked his head through the crack in the window, licked his tongue in and out, as blacksnakes usually do, using it as a type of snake radar to detect any unfavorable sights or sounds.

What he heard was favorable and what he saw not too alarming, so he slithered right across the window sill into the pulpit behind Preaching John.

"I have prided myself upon being afraid of neither man nor beast and having enough personal courage to fight the devil himself, but I was not made to stay in the pulpit with a blacksnake. So far as I know, that snake is the only thing that ever made me leave the pulpit," says John without apology.

One of the deacons, J. C. Washburn, grabbed a piece of wood from the nearby stove and hastily killed the snake. The service proceeded, but not without a little fear and misgiving, and not until someone closed the pulpit windows.

Members at Double Springs were probably no more or no less neighborly or quarrelsome than members of other churches in that day and time. If there was a matter of morals or a dispute over a property line, this matter was expected by all to come to the church for settlement. If any one of the principals involved did not agree, it became a matter of church discipline.

Very soon after coming to Double Springs, there was a dispute over a property line between two neighbors, A. F. McSwain and Irvin Philbeck. The new preacher visited both neighbors, looked over the property, had each one state his problem, and promised to take it up with the church right away. In a week or two nothing had happened so Mr. McSwain, being the younger, more vigorous, and of a fiery nature, thought he had to have a settlement right away.

As a ruse to win his case, he offered to resign his church membership and requested his letter. Brother Suttle entertained a motion that it be granted and had someone primed to make and second the motion. The letter was granted summarily with no fuss whatever. This was exactly what the young man did not want as he later told the church. He asked forgiveness, was reinstated and there was no more fussing over property lines.

Another case of discipline which came before the church before Suttle's time was the matter of the late D. A. F. Hamrick who was called in for reprimand for swearing. It seemed that he and one Martin Greene had been courting the daughters of John Bridges and had dared to stay as late as 9:00 P.M. Mr. Bridges came in, sent his daughters to bed and told the boys to go home.

This made Mr. Hamrick so mad that he ran out of the yard and began rolling over and over in Mr. Bridges' wheat field. "Dock, get up. You'll mash down the man's wheat," Martin told Hamrick. Whereupon Hamrick replied: "Damn the wheat and damn the man. I'll court somebody else's daughter." For this loss of temper he had to get up



Double Springs Baptist Church Now

in church and recant, saying he was sorry. Afterwards he became one of the best and most dependable members of the church.

The best way to illustrate what was accomplished at Double Springs in 37 years, I think, is to contrast the church and community before 1918 and after 1954.

Physically the community was not too different from any other rural community in Cleveland County at that time. It was about eight miles from the county seat, with the most thickly settled portion being along the Southern Railroad. Residents, who attended the church, farmers by occupation, lived within three to four miles. There were no radios, television sets, paved roads, or telephones and few automobiles. The pattern of life was almost as simple as it had been when the church was founded in 1844.

Now, with the passing of two World Wars, two or three financial crises, and a great depression, and with the modernization so characteristic of rural North Carolina, the community has everything available to residents of the county seat in Shelby. Every family in the church has one or more cars, a television set, telephone, radio, and all the modern conveniences found anywhere. Three major paved highways traverse the community. The local school has been consolidated at nearby Lattimore and children are transported in modern buses. No one walks to church any more.

The Industrial Revolution in this community has reversed the occupation ratios. Then, nine out of ten persons got all of their income from their labor on a farm; now, one or more members of nearly every family has an income from a non-farming source such as textiles, retail selling, teaching, or some other occupation. However, there are still some rural residents and a few are totally dependent upon farm income.

Forty years ago horses and mules contributed all horsepower for farming and transportation. Now a great fleet

of trucks and tractors have multiplied that horsepower hundreds of times.

Per capita income at Double Springs then was probably less than \$100 per year. Now it is close to \$1,500 per capita per year.

Following is a more detailed contrast in outline.

MEETING HOUSE: Then—small frame building approximately 40' x 60' valued at \$1,250. Now—Sanctuary, educational addition, scout hut, sexton's home and parsonage all valued at \$110,000, with a replacement value near \$200,000.

MEETINGS: Then—twice a month with one of the meetings being a Saturday Conference the day before preaching Sunday. Now—preaching twice each Sunday by a full time pastor with prayer service, teachers' meetings, and choir meetings weekly, with other meetings almost every night in the week.

EQUIPMENT: Then—one foot pedal organ, fifty hard benches, a pulpit stand, and three typical country church chairs, plus a few curtains on wires for the four Sunday School classes, one wood burning stove with about thirty feet of pipe circling around to give more heat before leaving the flue and the tall ceiling. These items comprised the total equipment of the church, except two little out-buildings, one marked "Men" and the other "Women".

Now—comfortable opera type seats for the sanctuary, all the recommended equipment for Standard Sunday Schools and Training Unions throughout all departments; electric church organ, pianos for every department, tape recorder, public address system, modern plumbing for indoor rest rooms, a well equipped church kitchen, large supply of tools for landscaping and church beautification, along with a great number of teaching and training aids such as maps, charts, and photographs.

LIBRARY: Then—unheard of. Now—approximately 300 volumes.

RECREATION: Now—supervised with planned socials, tennis, volleyball, and other equipment.

TRAINING UNION: Then—not yet introduced in North Carolina. Now—Story Hour, Junior, Intermediate, Senior and Adult Unions with a total of 91 members.

WOMAN'S MISSIONARY SOCIETY: Then—not organized. Now—a membership of 93 in five circles.

BROTHERHOOD: Then — there were none anywhere. Now—twelve meetings a year of all the leading men in the church.

MISSIONS: Then— a small box was placed in the back of the church and the women and others who were interested, put in small contributions once a month. The box was opened each fall to take money to the Association where the annual contribution was collected. This box sometimes yielded \$12 to \$15. Now—the church gives a total of \$5,606.33 to Missions including contributions to the Cooperative Program, Baptist Hospital, Home for the Aging, the Orphanage, Gardner-Webb College, and other Mission enterprises. It supports a Missionary to Brazil, Mrs. Maxey Kirk.

PER CAPITA GIVING: Then— the per capita gifts to all causes amounted to approximately \$9.77. Now—the per capita gift for Missions alone the year after Mr. Suttle left was approximately \$16 per year, and the per capita contribution for all causes was a little over \$72. This figure is almost double the per capita giving of the Southern Baptist Convention.

CHURCH MUSIC: Double Springs has always been a singing church and there was a good choir even in the old days, but it was limited by poor equipment and by untrained leaders. Now—there are three choirs with qualified leaders and musicians to continue the training and nearly 100 persons are enrolled in the music program.

PASTOR'S SALARY: The church paid John Suttle \$350 for services the first year and paid him \$1800 for his last year's work. The full time pastor's annual salary now is \$4,500 plus a nice home and a travel allowance.

HALL OF FAME: Photographs of most of the twenty pastors with biographical summary and their contribution

to growth and development of the church prepared by J. C. Washburn.

MEMBERSHIP: The resident membership was approximately 310 persons. Now—a little more than 350 resident members with another 150 non-resident members.

SUNDAY SCHOOL: Then—there were only four classes; two for adults and two for children, meeting in the four corners of the church with a flimsy curtain strung on wires between them. Children included persons up to about fourteen years of age and adults were all persons older. Small colored cards and Sunday School leaflets augmented the Bible study of the lesson.

The greatest contribution to the growth and development of the church at Double Springs was centered in the organizing and building of the Sunday School. Just as the secret of the Sunday School was the success of the church, so were John Suttle and Jasper Barnette with the leaders they trained, the key to the success of the Sunday School.

Double Springs had had a Sunday School since shortly after the Civil War. Mr. Edmond Lovelace had become obsessed with the idea that even though the community could not afford public schools, a great deal of education could be given his people in Sunday sessions at the little church. So, not only was the Bible taught and explained, but children brought their slates and pencils to do sums and to learn grammar. Both young and old went through the old Blue Back Speller and learned to spell and at the same time, absorbed the homely philosophy and factual information from that book.

During the early 70's by the time John Suttle was born, Mr. Lovelace had stimulated enough interest in Sunday School to have services every Sunday even though there was no preaching. He even kept it going through the winter in what he called, "an evergreen Sunday School".

By present standards, however, the Sunday School of 1917 was little better than the Sunday School of the 70's. Then came Suttle and Barnette. John had first met Jasper

in Shelby when he helped to organize the Second Baptist Church and was its pastor. Then Jasper had moved into the country and was at Double Springs as a farmer when Mr. Suttle was called.

Both men read all they could get their hands on about the new type Sunday School which was sweeping the Southern Baptist Convention. John attended all of the meetings of the Convention. He had met Arthur Flake, I. J. VanNess, Prince E. Burroughs, Dr. B. W. Spillman and other early pioneers of the better Sunday School movement.

By the time Arthur Flake's outline for "Building a Standard Sunday School" had been printed and before it was in book form, Suttle and Barnette had some ideas of what they must do at Double Springs. "Let us build the finest sanctuary possible for a country church, and along with it, classrooms to provide for the most modern rural Sunday School in the South," they said.

The war was over! The people still had a little war money in their pockets. The joy of victory and of the boys coming home gave them a lot of confidence in the future. In 1919-20 the plant was built. The total cost was between \$25,000 and \$30,000, not counting thousands of hours of volunteer labor. Joe Greene, C. A. Bridges, and Preston Hawkins became the steering committee for a larger building committee of 25 members.

A few of the members thought it was foolishness to build such a large plant out in the country. "We won't fill this building in twenty years," said one. "Country people just won't be regimented and graded into classes like they are in the city," said another. Still others thought it was the thing to do. "My wife and I were planning to build a new house this fall, but if you think we ought to build the church now, our home can wait," one deacon told Brother John.

One of John's first sermons was on "Stewardship" and most of the others he concentrated on that subject or upon Missions, Christian Education, giving to the local

poor or giving to the building fund. "We will either give the money to the Lord's program or in some way the Lord will get it. Your house may burn down, you may lose your crop from drought, flood, or fire, but the Lord will get it," he said. Then lay people of the community gave sacrificially and bountifully and the church was almost paid for by the time it was completed.

The Sunday School really did not get going until after the erection of the new church. Then with departments for all ages, proper classrooms, and teaching aids, more pupils showed up every Sunday.

The church first took a census. Superintendent Barnette found that within a radius of four miles there were more than enough Baptists and Baptist inclined persons to fill the church. He led all the officers and teachers to study Arthur Flake's book which by 1922 had been put into print and had become the second Gospel for the Baptist Sunday School Board in Nashville. "The New Testament is our whole authority and contains full instructions on how to build a church, but 'Building a Standard Sunday School' is the next best thing in telling you how to build a great church," John told his members.

Then came years of teaching and training and enlistment. Men in overalls and women in gingham aprons came to church, not only on Sunday but through the week, to take study courses to learn how to teach, how to study the Bible and how to enlist young people. They took course after course offered by the Sunday School Board; some took as many as eight study courses per year, many of them getting the Blue Seals and Gold Seals which represented study of all of the books available to Sunday School teachers.

John Suttle took every study course. Usually he would get someone else to teach the course, then set an example by taking all of the lectures and the final written examination. He did not ask any Sunday School teacher or officer to do anything he himself did not do.

In addition to his work at Double Springs, John was pastor at Double Shoals, Lawndale, New Bethel, Waco, and Zoar. In these five other churches he was trying to do the same thing, and at the same time was preaching the Gospel, marrying the young people, visiting the sick, and burying the dead.

Carefully and particularly he gave a tithe of every dollar of his income back into the church which had paid him. On all occasions he was optimistic and continuously gave encouragement to church leaders to whom the new methods were quite confusing and sometimes meaningless.

He mastered the Six Point record system of the Sunday School and later the Eight Point record system of the Training Union. Sometimes he preached whole sermons on each of the points of being present, on time, studying the lesson, bringing the Bible, giving an offering, staying for preaching.

He lived and breathed and preached Sunday School. To him the Sunday School was the Teaching Service of the church. "All of this is church just as much as the Preaching Service," he would say to his members.

After a few years of maintaining merely Standard Sunday School and after half a dozen other churches in the Association had also become standard, Suttle and Barnette began to consider the impossible. "Brother John, do you think we could possibly reach the Advanced Standard in our Sunday School at Double Springs?" Jasper asked the pastor one day. "We don't know what we can do until we try," was his answer.

This was the beginning of one of the most amazing accomplishments of any rural church in approximately 20,000 rural churches in the Southern Baptist Convention at that time. Advanced Standards were being formulated and outlined and planned for a great number of the more advanced city churches in Nashville, Birmingham, Atlanta, Dallas, Raleigh, and Richmond. No one up until that time

had dreamed that an Advanced Standard Sunday School could be built in a rural community with only 300 members.

Classes would have to be doubled in number, department organizations would have to be perfected, there would have to be unlimited equipment: tables, cabinets, teaching aids, maps, charts, and complicated record systems. In a city church the task was almost insuperable. In a rural situation, it was well nigh impossible.

Jasper Barnette created the organization on paper. He made suggestions to the deacons about dividing the church building into departments and classes. It was going to take a lot of time and money. Farmers worked all day in the fields, then came to the church and worked until bed time to make the necessary changes. An old garage became a workshop for building cabinets. Women varnished and painted dozens of items.

Another census had to be taken, scores of workers were enlisted, and new study courses were taken every month. More men and women who had barely finished the sixth grade, were reading books and magazines and learning more about the theory and practice of Sunday School than the average pastor in North Carolina knew at that time.

It finally happened. The reports were sent in to Nashville; names, records, inventories of equipment, grades of pupils, certified attendance at teacher's meetings, and summaries of statistical tables, all went to the Board. Officials at the Sunday School Board were amazed. They sent back for re-checking. Again the figures were given and the long sought, highly coveted banner for Advanced Standard Sunday Schools was first displayed in a rural church at Double Springs on a bright Sunday in February, 1922.

J. N. Barnette was not in Double Springs that day to see the banner raised. Like Moses, he did not remain in the Promised Land to taste the fruits of victory. Unlike Moses, it was not for sins committed, but it was for excellence in leading and planning Sunday School work. He

was chosen as Sunday School field worker for all of North Carolina in the late fall of 1921.

He moved to Dunn, North Carolina, and left at Double Springs his "Joshua" in the person of A. V. Washburn, Sr., who had assisted him for more than three years. A farmer and logging camp "sawyer", Washburn and his wife, Edith, soon mastered the details of this great experiment in Sunday School and kept it on the Advanced Standard until 1926 when A. V. was appointed a special worker for the Convention and moved to Sylva, North Carolina.

The efficiency and excellence of the Sunday School program was then maintained for many years under the leadership of Fred E. Greene, a rural mail carrier.

An amazing coincidence is that the Baptist Church at Dunn, North Carolina, reached the Advanced Standard only two weeks later. While Dunn was not strictly a rural church, it was a very small town in a rural area.

A portion of Dunn's accomplishment can be traced back to John Suttle. John had recommended J. N. Barnette to the Baptist State Convention to be a field worker for the North Carolina Sunday School program. In his spare time at Dunn, Jasper had instructed and trained a young man named C. C. Warren who became enthused about the idea and led his church to build a Standard Sunday School.

"I think I got a great deal of inspiration and information from both Jasper Barnette and John Suttle, and I have loved and appreciated both of them through the years," says Dr. Warren who is now pastor of North Carolina's largest Baptist Church in Charlotte, and is past president of the Southern Baptist Convention.

Dr. Warren says he knows more about John Suttle than Mr. Suttle realizes. "I know Jasper Barnette was devoted to him, and it was John W. Suttle whose exemplary life and devotion to his Lord made a definite impact on the life of Jasper Barnette.

"What can be said about his influence on Jasper can

also be said to an appreciable degree upon A. V. Washburn, Jr. If Double Springs Church has accomplished no more than giving to Southern Baptists Jasper Barnette and A. V. Washburn, Jr., only eternity can reveal the power of a church that can provide an atmosphere in which these two men heard the call of God for their lives. Probably more than any other human being, John Suttle is the instrument God used to guide them in the paths of inestimable service which they have followed."

How J. N. Barnette got his new job is interesting. John Suttle had been a member of the General Board of the Baptist State Convention for some time, and in one of the meetings, the late E. L. Middleton, Convention Secretary, made the statement that he was looking for a man who could do field work necessary for enlarging the Sunday School program.

"I've got your man," said John.

"What does he do and what sort of education does he have?" asked Mr. Middleton.

"He is a farmer right now and is between the plow handles. He hasn't had very much formal education but he is the best man in North Carolina," added John.

Mr. Middleton was a little dubious about taking an uneducated plow hand to lead Baptist Sunday School work for the entire State of North Carolina, but he agreed to meet Jasper at Hickory, North Carolina, the following Sunday. Jasper was to speak at a regional Sunday School conference on that day. After Mr. Middleton heard him speak the first time, he was convinced and agreed with John Suttle that they had found the right man.

Barnette's work in North Carolina was outstanding. In fact, so impressive and so successful that in 1927, he was called to Nashville, Tennessee, to work for the Sunday School Board and the entire Southern Baptist Convention.

The accomplishments at Double Springs meant much to many people. It meant most to members of the church, their families, and the community. As the news spread of

what could be done in an isolated rural area, other churches did the same thing.

A few years later John Suttle was pastor of seven Baptist churches at the same time, all of which had Standard Sunday Schools.

As moderator of the Association he saw to it that emphasis was placed upon Sunday School work along Associational lines. Soon nearly every church in the bounds of the Association had a Standard Sunday School.

In the ten year period from 1920 to 1930, Double Springs was one of the few churches in the Southern Baptist Convention to be considered a "laboratory", an example of what could be done in rural situations. Nearly every member of the staff of Sunday School personnel in Raleigh and Nashville came to visit this church. Departmental leaders would hold Associational and regional conferences at this little church, and then in the far flung rapidly expanding organization for Baptist work in all the other Southern states would say, "It has been done; it can be done in your church. Here is how it was done at Double Springs."

Writers from the Editorial Department prepared numerous articles about the church and illustrated them with photographs of the buildings, church activities, and pictures of the pastor. One of the most extensive articles was by Dr. Hight C. Moore who contributed several pages and pictures to the Sunday School Builder. Following are a few quotations from his article:

"Good leaven in the local community; positive influence in the Association; known far and wide for her achievements.

"More than a century the Civic, Cultural, Social, and Spiritual magnet in a neighborhood of sturdy folk with whom doing well demands well-being.

"The premises harmoniously landscaped, beautifully laid out, grassed and terraced; set with suitable shrubs and trees.

"A band of workers unashamed, studying to show themselves approved unto God.

"Mother of sons and daughters distinguished in wider fields of service; founder of several churches in its environs; birthplace of a great district Association.

"A commonwealth and kingdom dynamo of pure religion, high morality, good citizenship, community uplift, world betterment.

"Small of stature, but sinewy and strong with every brain cell and heart fiber functioning well, Pastor Suttle seems well qualified in every way. He has been a good minister of Jesus Christ—apt to teach, sound in doctrine, sober in judgment, safe in leadership, evangelical and evangelistic, tenderly sympathetic with all good, yet strictly uncompromising with any evil; ardent advocate of Christian education and zealous promoter of good citizenship, head of a happy home with a worthy wife and four children, all on their way to the home eternal in the heavens.

"Efficiency at rural Double Springs is just as evident and effectual as it could be in metropolitan Dallas, Atlanta, or Baltimore: efficiency in the preaching service, in the teaching service, in the training service, in the Missionary Society, in all benevolences for the support of the church at home and the spread of the Gospel abroad.

"A country church can be competent!

"A community predominantly Christian with neighbors neighborly and rich in the gold of the Golden Rule.

"A church membership of diligent, devout, dependable, developing young people and adults.

"A citizenry to count on throughout the region in good roads and residences; in schools and stores and shops, in manners and morals and money, in personality, politics, and public welfare; in loyalty to the country's call.

"A contribution in brief to human welfare the world over and down the ages."

John has long since forgiven the members for missing that first Thanksgiving service in his ministry at Double

Springs. However, perhaps his repeated censure, remonstrance, upbraiding, reproof and rebuke was just the stimulus to goad, lead and guide the church to win such a citation from Dr. Hight C. Moore.

Who knows?

“Shelby Daily Star”
September 3, 1920

AUTOMOBILE DAY

Clear the tracks for Automobile Day
At Double Springs Baptist Sunday School
Climb in and come along.

We are rolling with a merry song,
To the happy place we all belong,
With the Double Springs Jolly Throng.
A BIG PROGRAM AND A BIG TIME.

Bring your Fathers and your Mothers,
Bring your sisters and your brothers,
Bring your Uncles and your Aunties,
Bring your Grandmas and your Grand-daddies,
Bring your Kiddies and your babies,
Bring your friends and your neighbors,
No matter what kind of weather,
We will have a fine time together.
And don't you fail to remember,
It's the second Sunday in September.

Remember we will be looking for you at 9:30 a.m., September 12, 1920. Automobile Day.

Train up an auto in the way it should go, and when it is old it will not depart from going to church.

J. W. Suttle, Pastor

J. N. Barnette, Superintendent

RESOLUTIONS

A Resolution Authorized by the Double Springs Baptist Church in Conference July 7, 1954.

WHEREAS, The Reverend John W. Suttle, beloved pastor of the church for the past thirty-six years, has offered his resignation as pastor, effective September 26, 1954, and

WHEREAS, The church deeply regrets the loss of so valuable a pastor as Brother Suttle has been, now therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED, That in the resignation of Brother Suttle from the Ministry in this church we have lost one of the greatest of the servants and ministers of God that ever filled a pulpit, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That this church and community will never be able to properly evaluate the wonderful services he has performed for us and among us as he so faithfully preached the Gospel of his Lord and our Lord for these many years, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That the membership of this church express its love and appreciation to Mrs. Suttle for being his loyal co-worker and helper during these many years of his ministry to us, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That the church plant, the church organizations, the church gifts both for ourselves and others, and the reception of so many souls into the fellowship of this church, are all monuments to the love he had for us and the service he so faithfully performed for all who would come under his progressive and courageous leadership, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That this church recognizes and deeply appreciates the guiding hand that he has extended to so many young ministers from this and other churches as they endeavored to prepare themselves to answer the call of their Lord, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That the members of this church recall to memory and deeply appreciate his faithful attendance upon all the duties, services, and various meetings which were a part of the church work; that we now thank him that he never allowed the inclemency of the weather or the conditions of travel to keep him from the appointed task of serving his people and his God, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That the services of leadership and love he has so faithfully performed for the three generations who have come under the influence of his ministry in this church, will never be forgotten, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That a copy of this resolution be presented to Brother Suttle as he terminates his ministry among us, that a copy be placed by the church clerk in the permanent records of the church, and that a copy be sent to the *Biblical Recorder* for publication.

This the 26th day of September, 1954.

THE MEMBERS OF
DOUBLE SPRINGS BAPTIST CHURCH
F. E. GREENE
A. L. CALTON
J. S. GILLESPIE
Committee on Resolutions

X

Adventures Of An Eight Year Old At Beaver Dam

"JESUS, LOVER OF MY SOUL."

*He that believeth on the Son
hath everlasting life.*

John 3:36

Under the giant pine the little boy fell to his knees, cushioning his little body on a springy bed of moss and pine needles, and looked upward. Upward was over a hundred feet to the top of this largest tree in a virgin stand of timber around old Beaver Dam Baptist Church.

He bowed his head and prayed. It was a simple prayer in simple terms, telling the Lord of repentance for sins committed, asking for forgiveness, and expressing belief in Jesus.

"I knew I was saved then and there," John Suttle has told friends over and over again. "A cousin, Jesse Wray, knelt with me that day, and my father and uncle stood by."

John has been a member of Beaver Dam much of the time since 1880 and expects his final earthly rites to be said from that church.

Beaver Dam has been one of the favorite churches

among the 37 organizations he has pastored, and he vividly recalls many of the personal experiences in his early years there.

"I have always been grateful that 'Uncle' Neely Green had courage enough to make a motion to accept me," says John in remembrance. "I can still hear him say, 'Are you sure you love the Lord?' and 'Are you sure you want to be baptized and join this church?' and 'Are you sure you will make us a good member?'. To all these questions I answered a firm 'Yes, Sir'."

In the fall of the same year he joined, Brother John wanted to do something for his church, so he spent several days picking cotton. At the end of the week he had the sum of 25 cents which he wished to give. On preaching Sunday he went to church and tried to hand the quarter to the church treasurer. The treasurer, a big, gruff, unthinking man said, "Put your money in your pocket, boy. We've got enough men in this congregation to pay all the bills."

This almost broke little John's heart, and not knowing what else to do he went to "Uncle" Neely who had voted to let him come into the church. "I'll take this quarter and see that it gets to the right place," said the kindly old man.

"I made a resolution then," John says, "that if ever I grew up and had anything to do with a church, I would encourage children to come and join; not only to join, but to give a portion of their money to the Lord."

That he has always done in his churches, and their record of stewardship among young and old is evidence he was right.

In 1950, upon the 15th anniversary at Beaver Dam as pastor, and 70 years after he joined, the pastor did an unusual thing. He had a florist send a basket of flowers to place on the table in front of the pulpit. "I wish to call your attention to these flowers and ask you to honor the memory of a man who was brave enough and who had



Beaver Dam, the Home Church

faith enough to make a motion for a timid eight-year-old boy to join this church. His name, Neely Green."

John was pastor at Beaver Dam for twenty years from 1935 through 1954. At the end of the twenty years, the church held remarkable memorial services and presented him with a gold watch and a \$100 check. Senator Robert Morgan, a deacon, Sunday School teacher, and an active lay-leader, had charge of the program and paid the retiring minister an eloquent tribute.

In reviewing the growth of the church in twenty years, Senator Morgan pointed out that when John arrived the church had a budget of \$1,200. During the last year of his ministry, the budget was \$15,475. In 1935 the membership was 353 and in 1954 it was 532. During that time 142 persons were baptized into fellowship of the church.

During Mr. Suttle's period of leadership, Beaver Dam had three separate building campaigns, in which more than \$100,000 was raised and spent on plant improvements which included a new Sunday School annex with eighteen new classrooms, a new heating plant, new furnishings and decorations for the sanctuary, and a \$22,000 parsonage which was ready for the new pastor, the Reverend Oscar Funderburke who succeeded Mr. Suttle.

Following his letter of resignation to Beaver Dam, the congregation voted to accept it only on the condition that John Suttle would accept the title, Pastor Emeritus, for the rest of his life. The end of his ministry there was no dwindling, tapering-off affair. He baptized nine candidates for membership on the Sunday morning he submitted his resignation.

Mr. Suttle had no more trouble with finances at Beaver Dam than he did at any other church. He simply preached stewardship and the money always came in. During the war in 1943, Holt McPherson, editor of the *Daily Star* at Shelby, heard that Beaver Dam had bought a \$1,000 savings bond. To him this seemed an unusual thing for a rural church to do, so he called up the minister and expressed his amazement that a church in the country would

have money in the treasury, and further, that they would see fit to invest it in war bonds. Mr. Suttle replied: "It isn't unusual for Beaver Dam and neither did we spend all of our money for a war bond. I think I can predict that my five other country churches will have some cash surpluses in the treasury this fall and some of them also may invest in war bonds."

These war bonds later were converted to cash to pay for the building program.

Following his resignation at Beaver Dam, Brother Suttle got two letters which he prizes very highly. One was from the Reverend J. C. Gillespie of Reidsville, North Carolina, a life-long friend and retired Missionary which reads as follows:

November 2, 1950

My dear Brother Suttle:

Well, Sunday was one of the most enjoyable days in my experience, I think. Socially it was so fine and surely the Lord was present, and the fellowship was so sweet. I do rejoice in the great work of Beaver Dam during the past century, and certainly the work as it has so encouragingly gone forward during the later years. Especially do we note great progress during the time of your pastorate. I know you are happy and we former pastors are happy with you. I thank you and the church so much for the invitation to be present with you on your centennial.

And how much do I appreciate the check for \$50.00 Brother Humphries handed me. This is much larger than I have ever received for a single service. Thank you and the church very much for this check.

Rest assured I shall not forget you and the Beaver Dam people. May the Lord's great blessings continue with you in your great work for Him.

Sincerely and cordially,
Jas. C. Gillespie

The other letter was written by the chairman of the Board of Deacons and the Church Clerk upon the authorization of the congregation as follows:

September 10, 1954

TO OUR BELOVED PASTOR

Dear Brother Suttle:

The people of Beaver Dam Church will never be able to tell, or in any way express, their feelings of gratitude for such an inspir-

ing pastor, leader, and guide as you have been to us here at Beaver Dam.

Your grateful praise, in times of thanksgiving, your wit and humor as you visited among us, and your heart-felt sympathy in times of sorrow will always endear you to our hearts.

Our hearts always swell with pride when we think of the many honors that have come to our pastor and just the mention of your name anywhere in our Association and state would always register recognition on their faces.

Truly we can say, as all Southern Baptists, that you are the "Dean of Pastors" and we have been highly honored to have such a man lead our humble people.

We will not think of you as leaving us because we will always want you in our presence.

We pray God's blessings on you as you begin your well earned rest and we will always remember you in our prayers.

With heart felt love and devotion.

The members of Beaver Dam Baptist Church

- (s) Yates McGinnis
Chairman Board Deacons
- (s) E. D. Humphries
Church Clerk

Beaver Dam, in many ways, may be considered the home church of the Hamrick generation in Cleveland County, and the Hamricks are the most numerous of any family group in Cleveland and Rutherford counties. All of the Hamricks in North Carolina originally descended from George Hamrick, or Homrick, who came from Germany in 1731 and settled for a time in Pennsylvania. A short time before the American Revolution one of his sons came to this section as a pioneer settler. Uncle Berry Hamrick, who was born in 1820 and died in 1917 at the age of 97, was a member at Beaver Dam for many years but later joined Double Springs. He had a good memory and was very fond of talking about the old days, and Mr. Suttle as a child often talked with him at both churches.

One of the most colorful Hamricks of the Beaver Dam Community was "Tater" Jim Hamrick. He was called by this nickname because he liked potatoes so well; that is, sweet potatoes—the Southern yam. He ate them every

day and studied methods of growing potatoes so well that he could grow more on the ground than any of his neighbors.

In fact, he had to raise a lot of potatoes to feed his 22 children. He reared 21 sons and one daughter to manhood and womanhood, and when the occasion afforded, took them all to church.

One afternoon a drummer for Stetson hats was trying to make a sale to one of the village merchants when in strolled "Tater Jim" with his 21 sons to buy hats. "Listen," gasped the Stetson salesman. "I'll give each son a high top beaver hat if they will put them all on at the same time and march around the court square bearing a placard stating that Stetson presented the hats!"

"Tater" gratefully accepted, but a second thought convinced him that Beaver hats were no good for farmer boys. He asked that the gift be changed to soft felt hats. It was changed, and "Tater Jim" led his 21 sons in a sensational march around the Shelby court square wearing the new hats Stetson had given them.

Beaver Dam was a logical location for a church. The church is on a ridge between two small contributing elements of Beaver Dam Creek. The creek got its name from the fact that in pioneer days considerable numbers of beavers worked in the head waters making their dams and rearing their young.

It was located on the south side of the Shelby-Rutherford post road; the main east-west highway through the county, and was near a bold spring at which the early settlers could get water for themselves and their animals. Sometime prior to 1850, several ministers had been conducting services at a stand or brush arbor. There was so much interest in these services that they decided to organize a regular Baptist Church.

On December 23, 1850, a presbytery was convened and about thirty persons who had letters or who wanted to be baptized met and organized a Baptist Church. The exact records of this first meeting are not available but in April

1881, a resolution stated: "Whereas the presbytery that organized the church failed to record their proceedings, or if they did, the clerk failed to transcribe them. We, therefore, for the satisfaction of the succeeding members of this church, certify that the presbytery was constituted from the deaconship and ministers of the following churches: Sandy Run, Boiling Springs, Mount Sinai and Zion, and that the presbytery met on December 23, 1850."

Most of the members were named McSwain, Jones, Hamrick, Harrill, Bostic, or Bowen.

Several close acquaintances of the Suttle family were among the first pastors—the Reverends R. P. Logan, Robert Poston, Lewis McSwain, Dove Pannel, Landrum Ezell, G. M. Webb, and J. M. Bridges who was pastor at the time John made his confession and became a member.

The earliest ministers received from \$7.00 to \$15.00 per year for their services, but the year John joined the church, Pastor Bridges received \$47.95.

XI

"The Association Will Come To Order"

"ONWARD, CHRISTIAN SOLDIERS"

*Behold how good and how pleasant
it is for brethren to dwell together in unity.*

Psalm 133:1

A wave of restlessness was beginning to go through the brethren of the Kings Mountain Association during the second day of its session in the year 1912 at Mt. Zion. The sun was sinking rapidly and the October days were shortening. Many miles had to be traveled by some to get back to Shelby, Fallston, or even as far away as Lattimore or Casar.

John Suttle had been nominated as moderator to succeed the saintly A. C. Irvin, the white haired, blue eyed, lovable man who had been the moderator for ten years.

Brother Abe was getting old. He knew it and the brethren knew it. He had been a fine moderator and a wonderful diplomat, but he had firmly refused re-election.

There were a number of older ministers in the Association who could have succeeded him, but the delegates decided they wanted a younger man; a man with a future before him who could "get things done". They decided

on John Suttle, and for the next 39 years, year in and year out, through thick and thin, through two world wars, in an era marked by surging growth, prosperity and adversity, John Suttle was re-elected moderator. He served continuously from the fall of 1912 and the Mt. Zion meeting, through the 1952 meeting which was held at Lattimore, Bethany, and Norman's Grove.

His first session as the presiding officer was at Zion in 1913 when the Reverend L. W. Swope preached the introductory sermon and J. J. Lattimore was clerk. In the intervening years he also had as his clerk G. G. Page, a newspaper editor; J. V. DeVenny, a retired minister; J. W. Costner, a layman who became minister while he was clerk; and the Reverend Lawrence Roberts, a minister and the present clerk.

As the presiding officer of a great Association, John followed in the footsteps of a number of illustrious ministers and laymen. Tom Dixon, Dove Pannel, G. W. Rollins, and L. M. Berry presided in the sessions before the Civil War. R. P. Logan, J. H. Yarborough, A. L. Stough, J. Y. Hamrick, H. F. Schenck, and E. Y. Webb had brought the Association into the 20th Century. Major Schenck had had the longest tenure of any moderator, having served thirteen years while Tom Dixon had served ten years, but not in succession.

In 1912, the Association had 38 churches, only three of which had full time pastors. They reported 7,626 members with 300 baptisms for the year. There were approximately 4,000 persons in Sunday School with 327 women enrolled in Mission Societies.

Total gifts for the year were \$25,777.66 of which \$2,642.39 went to Missions and Benevolences. This was an annual per capita gift for all causes of the magnificent sum of \$3.73.

For the next forty years under Suttle's leadership, the Association was to advance in all directions. The number of churches grew to 62, of which thirty had full time pas-

tors. Membership in 1954 was over 20,000 and nearly a thousand new members were being baptized each year. Sunday Schools had enrolled 18,421 and Training Unions had 4,345. Women's Missionary Societies were found in nearly every church with a total of 3,941 members. There were 839 men who had joined Brotherhoods.

Total gifts for local objects amounted to \$643,921.27 with an additional \$133,774.84 going to Missions and Benevolences. This was a per capita gift to all causes of \$38.22, more than a ten-fold increase.

Being moderator of a growing, expanding Association was not easy. However, John Suttle almost made a liar out of the copy book whose dictum says, "You can fool some of the people all of the time, and you can fool other people part of the time, but you can't fool all of the people all of the time."

He didn't have to fool the people. They knew him well and liked him well enough to re-elect him each time for forty years. In the first place, he was pastor of from five to seven churches most of that forty years, and with a nucleus of delegates from seven churches who liked their minister and wanted to see him continue leadership, it was not so strange that he continued to be re-elected.

Again, the dispatch and diplomacy with which he presided at an Associational meeting was something out of this world. He began on time and closed on time. He kept everybody happy, laughing part of the time and often shedding a few tears.

"Brother Huggins, you have five minutes to speak to this Association," he would tell M. A. Huggins, General Secretary of the Baptist State Convention. Brother Huggins knew he had five minutes and only five minutes. If he went over his allotted time the gavel would sound and Brother John would ask the Association if it wished to vote more time for the speaker. Over the years speakers came to know that as a presiding officer, Brother Suttle did give them all the time allotted but not a minute more. The Association liked it. A great deal more business mat-

ters were transacted. Long-winded speeches, sermons, or harangues never were permitted.

"I consider the business matters of this Association just as important as any service in the Church," John would tell the delegates. "You people have your own churches and your own business to attend to at home. We will come here and tend to the Lord's business and then go home and tend to ours," he would say.

During one of the last sessions of the Association he told the body, "It has been a real joy to have the opportunity to serve this Association for forty years. I deeply appreciate this check for \$201 you have given me as an expression of your love."

The Reverend C. O. Greene, one of Suttle's preacher boys and one on whom he had laid his hands when he was ordained as a minister and as a deacon, had presented the check from the Association.

The previous year Greene had presented Moderator Suttle with a gavel made from a piece of wood taken from one of the old logs in the home place of Elder Joseph Suttle, John's grandfather. Tearfully but joyfully, he had accepted the gift and later when the Reverend C. C. Crowe was elected to succeed him, passed the historic wood instrument on to Brother Crowe.

Many people have wondered how one man among so many able, intelligent, natural born leaders in a great Association could continue to be elected moderator. One of his friends gave this explanation. "He had an ease of manner with which he could hold an audience and get things done. He could see all the problems ahead. He had a sense of humor. His personality sparkled. He won the office time after time by sheer force of personality and by continuing to demonstrate his ability."

For many years the only formal meeting the Association held was in the fall. For the past twenty years or more, however, there have been meetings both spring and fall to take care of the Association's business. Since 1933,

the Association has had a General Board with representatives from all of the churches meeting once a month to take care of interim problems and to keep up the larger program of the present 64 churches. John usually attends all of these meetings and keeps fully informed about the work being carried on.

In a recent meeting of this general board at the First Baptist Church in Shelby he was asked to speak on the subject, "Advice to Young Preachers". His outline follows:

1. Younger preachers do not face the hardships the older preachers faced.
2. The younger preachers have better facilities for spreading the gospel and attending to local field ministerial duties than did their predecessors.
3. The younger preachers are prepared better theologically than were the older preachers.
4. The younger preachers will be expected to render a greater service both locally and in a more diversified manner than were the older preachers.
5. The younger preacher must continue to propound the doctrine of total Christian stewardship and to expand upon it whenever and wherever possible.
6. The younger preachers will be rewarded according to their service to God.

This entire dissertation was spiced with witty jokes, proverbial sayings, colloquial phrases, and the entire group laughed and grew serious alternately as they listened intently while this grand old man of God drew upon his many years of knowledge and experience.

FORTY YEARS OF GROWTH—1912-1952

KINGS MOUNTAIN BAPTIST ASSOCIATION

REV. JOHN W. SUTTLE, Moderator

Year	Churches	Full Time Churches	Baptisms	Church Members	S. S. Members	B. T. U. Members	W. M. U. Members	Brotherhood Members	Local Gifts	Mission Gifts	Per Capita Gifts
1912	38	3	300	7,626	4,044		327		\$ 25,777.66	\$ 2,642.39	\$ 3.73
1913	39	2	385	7,815	4,636		702		33,149.49	2,927.61	4.61
1914	39	2	404	8,091	5,050		791		21,633.67	5,598.29	3.36
1915	42	2	347	8,323	5,088		796		20,371.76	5,215.52	3.07
1916	42	1	298	8,347	5,419		743		16,222.23	5,476.64	2.60
1917	41	1	453	8,570	5,409		620		20,204.24	6,315.06	3.09
1918	41	1	482	8,941	5,443		582		27,667.09	7,644.30	3.95
1919	37			8,079	5,436				41,671.84	20,000.00	7.63
1920	38	2	499	8,036	5,723	335	610		45,326.27	39,596.87	10.50
1921	39	3	402	8,134	6,452		738		63,394.89	24,714.54	10.83
Ten Years Ave.	39	2	397	8,196	5,270	335	656	0	30,416.36	10,013.22	5.33
Suttle Churches in 1921	6	0	72	1,029	750	0	161	0	20,168.81	2,625.10	22.70
1922	40	4	580	8,513	6,692				57,113.23	37,306.56	10.39
1923	40	5	351	8,852	7,157		761		65,282.53	26,005.59	10.31
1924	42	4	539	9,617	7,662				79,085.00	33,786.18	11.72
1925	42	4	561	9,639	8,947	1,670			163,230.80	23,741.70	19.38
1926	41	5	476	9,709	9,754	1,380			68,924.12	15,153.37	8.65
1927	40	5	585	10,493	9,719	1,837			65,899.56	22,447.59	8.42
1928	41	4	442	10,614	11,292				109,259.13	27,256.22	12.67
1929	41		622	11,265	10,509				110,879.68	30,320.83	12.53
1930	42	7	485	11,494	10,710	2,035	1,672		92,765.00	22,879.00	10.07
1931	42	7	718	11,992	10,892	1,910	1,429		81,218.74	22,292.02	8.62
Ten Years Ave.	41	5	536	10,219	9,333	1,764	1,287	0	88,575.78	26,118.90	10.48
Suttle Churches in 1931	6	0	92	1,445	1,175	254	83	0	14,769.94	2,444.82	12.29

FORTY YEARS OF GROWTH—Continued

Year	Churches	Full Time Churches	Baptisms	Church Members	S. S. Members	B. T. U. Members	W. M. U. Members	Brotherhood Members	Local Gifts	Mission Gifts	Per Capita Gifts
1932	42	8	651	12,264	11,523	1,946	1,475		65,227.83	8,356.48	6.00
1933	42	7	584	12,729	11,881	1,662	1,598		61,556.51	9,702.91	5.60
1934	42	6	643	13,315	10,904	2,033	1,332		57,912.67	14,398.65	5.43
1935	42	8	708	13,578	11,400	2,054	1,576		75,296.52	16,055.15	6.73
1936	43	8	512	13,817	11,357	2,103	1,564		76,045.79	16,391.72	6.60
1937	43	7	562	13,990	12,322	1,923	1,796		75,546.02	23,581.23	7.09
1938	45	10	936	14,817	12,168	2,435	2,016		87,094.36	22,573.46	7.40
1939	45	10	468	15,060	12,137	2,090	1,333		85,036.88	27,124.60	7.45
1940	48	14	605	15,209	11,974	1,973	1,901		100,998.81	28,120.59	9.01
1941	48	13	544	15,446	11,126	1,729	2,020		118,526.83	27,316.74	9.44
Ten Years Ave.	44	10	621	14,022	11,679	1,935	1,661		81,123.22	19,362.22	7.07
Suttle Churches In 1941	6	0	47	1,636	1,095	163	96		5,986.74	3,585.96	5.86
1942	48	14	529	15,602	11,312	1,783	2,075		126,449.93	71,120.84	12.66
1943	49	16	437	15,724	10,912	1,645	2,090		161,398.40	70,215.30	14.79
1944	49	16	451	16,059	10,871	1,393	2,033		172,696.00	202,641.77	23.34
1945	50	21	819	16,535	11,099	1,553	2,267		206,874.51	160,019.55	22.79
1946	52	23	694	17,052	12,411	2,150	2,302		261,865.25	136,462.15	23.36
1947	54	18	687	17,586	13,735	2,514	2,734	73	372,397.64	181,413.42	31.49
1948	57	19	280	18,076	13,894	2,710	2,946	106	368,143.19	145,092.83	28.38
1949	58	23	1,075	18,974	15,744	3,205	3,229	246	536,083.28	121,914.06	34.67
1950	61	26	1,046	19,730	16,683	4,030	3,590	648	628,785.10	133,976.22	39.18
1951	62	30	854	20,348	18,421	4,345	3,941	839	643,921.27	133,774.84	38.22
Ten Years Ave.	54	20	687	17,568	13,508	2,533	2,720	382	348,081.45	135,663.09	26.82
Suttle Churches in 1951	2	0	28	983	847	117	157	127	27,384.92	8,556.00	36.56

XII

"This Is The Way We Build Our Churches"

"GIVE OF YOUR BEST TO THE MASTER"

*Be ye doers of the Word
and not hearers only.*

James 1:22

John Suttle has been a builder both of churches and communities.

He has built churches mainly through building good Sunday Schools and at the same time strengthening all other auxiliary organizations of the church; he has built communities by building a better church and by training and using the talent in native, natural born leaders.

In all the 37 churches John has served, he has tried to take the church beyond the point of work and efficiency and spiritual development that it had when he arrived. In churches which needed new buildings, he was able to lead the membership in a building program, if he stayed as long as three or four years.

Of the seventeen churches in the Shelby area and units of the Kings Mountain and Sandy Run Associations, at least fourteen congregations erected new houses of worship and Sunday School plants during his pastorate, or he had

led the congregation to approve plans that produced a new building soon after he resigned. Several of the churches, especially those at which he held long pastorates, built not once but two or even three times to care for growth and expansion.

During the 29 year period of his ministry from 1916 to 1945 inclusive, he was pastor of from five to seven churches, usually averaging six churches. During this period he preached three times every Sunday and had an appointment for each week night. These meetings would consist of prayer meetings, teachers' meetings, deacons' meetings, Woman's Missionary Society meetings, church suppers and various kinds of commemorative meetings such as Thanksgiving, Christmas, and Easter.

During those 29 years he had no vacation and only in the past five or six years has he given himself the luxury of a vacation. Funerals, weddings, family reunions and personal affairs had to be worked into this "impossible" schedule.

During that period, Brother John baptized approximately 5,000 people, registered around 24,000 miles per year on his automobile, made the necessary visits to the hospital and to the sick and shut-ins in the various communities. Ten churches were involved in this particular period of his ministry, being New Bethel, Lawndale, Double Shoals, Double Springs, Sandy Run, Waco, Patterson Grove, Beaver Dam, New Hope, and Zoar. With one exception, all of these churches built new sanctuaries and educational plants and all of them had Standard Sunday Schools. They unquestionably took the lead in the Association in adding Training Unions, Missionary Societies, organized choirs and Brotherhoods to their list of activities.

Tabulation of statistics for Suttle churches in almost any period since 1916 will show that they have led the Association in tithing, baptisms, daily Vacation Bible Schools, growth in number of members, and in overall evangelism and stewardship.

THE PARSON'S SCHEDULE

A TYPICAL MONTH

May

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
1 11:00 a.m. Waco 3:00 p.m. Patterson Grove 8:00 p.m. Waco	2 8:00 p.m. New Bethel Teachers' Meet.	3 7:00 p.m. Waco Teachers' Meet. 8:00 p.m. Deacons' Meet.	4 8:00 p.m. Double Springs Teachers' Meet.	5 8:00 p.m. Beaver Dam Teachers' Meet.	6 8:00 p.m. Double Shoals Teachers' Meet.	7 2:00 p.m. Double Springs 8:00 p.m. Patterson Grove Teachers' Meet.
8 11:00 a.m. Double Springs	9 7:00 p.m. New Bethel Teachers' Meet. 8:00 p.m. Deacons' Meet.	10 8:00 p.m. Waco Teachers' Meet.	11 8:00 p.m. Double Springs Teachers' Meet.	12 8:00 p.m. Beaver Dam Teachers' Meet.	13 7:00 p.m. Double Shoals Teachers' Meet. 8:00 p.m. Deacons' Meet.	14 2:00 p.m. Beaver Dam 7:00 p.m. Patterson Grove Teachers' Meet. 8:00 p.m. Deacons' Meet.
15 11:00 a.m. 8:00 p.m. Beaver Dam	16 8:00 p.m. New Bethel Teachers' Meet.	17 6:15 p.m. Patterson Grove Teachers' Meet. 8:00 p.m. Waco Teachers' Meet.	18 7:00 p.m. Double Springs Teachers' Meet. 8:00 p.m. Deacons' Meet.	19 8:00 p.m. Beaver Dam Teachers' Meet.	20 8:00 p.m. Double Shoals Teachers' Meet.	21 2:00 p.m. New Bethel 8:00 p.m. Double Shoals
22 11:00 a.m. New Bethel 3:00 p.m. Double Shoals Lawndale	23 8:00 p.m. New Bethel Teachers' Meet.	24 6:15 p.m. Patterson Grove Teachers' Meet. 8:00 p.m. Waco Teachers' Meet.	25 8:00 p.m. Double Springs Teachers' Meet.	26 7:00 p.m. Beaver Dam Teachers' Meet. 8:00 p.m. Deacons' Meet.	27 8:00 p.m. Double Shoals Teachers' Meet.	28 2:00 p.m. New Bethel 8:00 p.m. Lawndale
29 Attended some place each fifth Sunday.	30 8:00 p.m. New Bethel Teachers' Meet.	31 8:00 p.m. Waco Teachers' Meet.	Followed this busy schedule over a period of 29 years			

Followed this busy schedule over
a period of 29 years

His churches alone in the Kings Mountain Association since 1908 have raised nearly \$1,000,000 for all purposes; nearly \$400,000 for Missions and Benevolences.

An avid supporter of Christian Education, Suttle led his churches always to support Gardner-Webb College and all forms of Christian Education.

He tried to lead his churches to become centers of their communities, not only in spiritual but in social and civic activities.

Suttle churches are New Testament churches; all cooperate with the denominational program.

In this great problem of building churches in diverse communities, Suttle had a plan. It is very similar to the plan advocated by the Sunday School Board and the Southern Baptist Convention for the past forty years. In many instances, the Board and Convention have adopted Suttle ideas and plans.

John usually tried to do five things.

1. **LOCATE THE PEOPLE.** He led his church to take a census, check the church rolls, and put down a written record of where everybody within the accepted boundary of the community lived.
2. **UNITS WERE ADDED.** He challenged classes and departments to enlarge the organization, to organize new classes and new departments.
3. **MORE SPACE PROVIDED.** In some cases only curtains and screens were available. In other instances, buildings were remodeled, but most of the time he led the community to see that a new building would be necessary to care for growth and expansion.
4. **WORKERS WERE TRAINED.** In study courses, class meetings, deacons meetings, personal conferences, and by attending meetings at other churches or by reading books and magazines.
5. **VISITATION WAS MADE.** Teachers and officers, deacons, and the pastor went into the homes over and over again until the people were enlisted in the regular services of the church.

This master plan paid off. He then was able to put into effect the basic principles of the Standard of Excellence.

*The Reverend John
Suttle, Reverend
Easom of Shelby,
and Reverend
E. M. Smith of Dover*



*Seated: J. D. S. Carpenter, New Bethel; Mr. Suttle; F. E. Green,
Double Springs. Standing: W. N. Pope, Waco; J. W. Scism, Patter-
son Grove; F. M. McGinnis, Beaver Dam; Carl Spangler, Double
Shoals.*

There was no question in his mind or that of his members that the Sunday School was a part of the church. It was the Teaching Service of the church.

The enrollment of the Sunday School, from toddling babies to palsied oldsters, included everybody. His schools were graded. Baptist literature was used throughout. Use of the Bible was emphasized. In a rural church it was the rule and not an exception that everybody stayed for the preaching service.

"I remember one church where I was called that on the first Sunday just before I was to preach the superintendent announced that the congregation was dismissed. I asked why. He answered, 'I am dismissing the Sunday School so we can come back to the preaching service'." Said Brother John, "From now on let's just merge the teaching service with the preaching service. It is all church. If we dismiss them now it is an open invitation to go home."

Evangelism was stressed in every department of the Sunday School. Workers' meetings were held weekly and great groups of rural people who never had studied a book in their lives were awarded seals and diplomas by the hundreds. All denominational work was stressed as the occasion arose with special offering being made or a particular project being placed in the budget.

John has been asked often what he thinks of the future of the rural church.

"I think we have just begun. I believe we have overdone this idea of consolidation even in our public schools. We have just scratched the surface of what it is possible to do in a small community. They are not isolated any more. Our people are not backward, ignorant, superstitious, or different in kind from city dwellers."

He has been asked what still remains the greatest need in building rural churches.

"Leaders!" is a quick reply. "Leaders with a definite program. Young ministers who have been trained for leadership and trained to discover the qualities of leadership among their members."

Asked what he considered the key to his success in situations where other pastors have failed with rural churches, John says, "If I have succeeded at all, it has been because I have tried to preach the Gospel and the whole Gospel. I have done my best to preach so that people can understand. I have stayed with my churches in season and out of season, in prosperity and adversity. I have made an effort to train teachers, officers, and leaders and have encouraged them to be faithful and earnest.

"I have never tried to force my people to adopt plans or programs. My policy has been to teach and instruct faithfully and when the opportune time came, to put the program before them. Usually they have adopted it. When you lead people to do a thing themselves, it is likely to succeed because they did it. They know about it then; they will have a deeper interest in it, and will work harder to *MAKE* it succeed.

"I have tried to challenge my members for a life of service and have sought to make them understand the words of the Master when He said, 'He that would save his life shall lose it, but he that would lose his life for my sake and the Gospel's shall find it'."

In building churches, one of John's secrets has been enthusiasm. He has shown personal interest and has stimulated interest in other people. He likes to tell an April fool story on himself.

"A good many years ago I was walking across the court square on the first day of April. I noticed a group of little boys very eagerly and rapturously looking up into a tree. They were pointing and gesticulating with such enthusiasm that I let my curiosity get the best of me and walked over to ask them what it was all about.

"They gleefully shouted 'April fool!' and said there was nothing in the tree at all, but their enthusiasm was attractive enough to accomplish their aim. I often say if Christians would be more enthusiastic about their religion, more people would be attracted to the Lord's work and that is no April fool."

Two books stimulated Brother John's interest in rural work. One was by Dr. J. W. Jent, published in 1924. Dr. Jent, a native farm boy of southern Kentucky and reared in Missouri, wrote challengingly about the problems of rural churches in the South. He had the conviction that one of the firmest rooted churches in the world is the genuine 100 per cent democratic Baptist church in the country.

Another book which Mr. Suttle has enjoyed very much is *Forty Years A Country Preacher*, by George B. Gilbert, published by Harper and Brothers of New York. Mr. Gilbert was, about twenty years ago, chosen as the typical country minister of the United States. He, like Brother Suttle, buried himself deep in the country and worked all his life with rural people. The book was a homey, down-to-earth story of his life and the trials and tribulations which came to a Congregationalist minister in the horse and buggy days.

Lest the reader be misled, John Suttle was not the only pastor who believed in or worked for the Sunday Schools. His churches were not the only churches which organized or developed these good schools. As a whole, he was only doing a better than average job in a program of Religious Education which had begun in the Kings Mountain Association nearly a hundred years before.

Before the Civil War, in October 1856, a Sabbath School Committee composed of J. R. Logan, S. McBrayer, and J. A. Roberts urged the five-year-old Kings Mountain Association to adopt some plan for Sabbath Schools with the Bible as their textbook, that they might "Bring up your children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." Little heed was taken of this report or other references to the need for Sunday Schools until the early 70's. About the time John Suttle was born in 1872, Kings Mountain had an Association-wide Sunday School Convention, and within ten years nearly every church reported some sort of Bible teaching, not only to the children but to all church members.

By the time John was ordained a minister in 1890, Sunday Schools were "Evergreen", that is, open all the year instead of being "hibernating" or "Closed-for-the-winter-schools". Statistical records of these Sunday Schools became a part of the minutes of the Association.

By the turn of the century, Southern Baptists had begun officially the Sunday School movement, and Dr. B. W. Spillman, "The Sunday School Man", a friend of John Suttle, was going all over the South explaining the possibilities of the new movement. By 1909 and 1910, after John Suttle had been to South Carolina, Stanly, Johnston, and Madison counties and had come back to Cleveland for the rest of his life, he had already observed in his own churches that:

1. 90% of all baptisms are from the Sunday School.
2. 75% of Mission gifts come through the Sunday School.
3. A majority of the useful members in any church were those who had been in Sunday School fifteen to twenty years previously.

With all of this background, by the end of World War I, he was prepared to challenge his churches with any constructive program. He even made a success of his churches' part in the "75 Million Campaign", even though the total goals of the denomination were not reached and even though personal dishonesty and embezzlement of denominational funds were discovered later in high places.

"The effort to do bigger things did us all good," he said.

Suttle was interested in building more and more of everything, not only in his own churches, but in all the churches. When any occasion presented itself, he invited leaders from Raleigh, Nashville, the Seminaries, Mission fields, and Convention agencies to come to the Association. Not only to visit in his churches but to visit in all the churches or to hold conferences for leadership training. He was particularly interested in improving teaching.

On one phase of community and church building, Brother John has changed his mind. In the early 20's he said, "I do not think all of these communities need a full

time pastor. If I were a full time pastor I probably could do no more in one community than I am doing in five."

Brother John has some definite ideas of what to do in retirement. After 65 years in the active ministry he says, "I want to spend the next 25 years going from one church to another in this section telling people how to treat their preacher. I'll tell them to be kind to him, cooperate with him, get a lot of work out of him, and together with him, do all the Lord's work that needs to be done in that community." Then slyly he adds:

"Part of that time I want to spend designing new church buildings. I believe I would design a sanctuary which, at the beginning of the service, would have only one empty pew, and it would be located in the back. As soon as the members came in and filled it up, it would automatically roll down to the front and another seat would take its place. Then, as soon as all the members were present, they would be down at the front where the pastor could see them.

"A second feature of this church would be a pulpit which upon the stroke of 12:00 would automatically drop through the floor taking any long-winded preacher with it."

Now in retirement, John believes all of the rural churches which he has served should look forward to the time when they will have full time pastors. Several already have such pastors. Several factors have contributed to this change. Among them, increased size of membership, better transportation and communication, and more activities in which members of the church and their families can engage.

In latter years, Mr. Suttle has been convinced that the church should play a greater role in supervising and in being the center of community recreation. "God made our physical bodies as well as our mental, emotional, and spiritual bodies, and they all need development. When I come to die and have my body carried into the church, I

don't want people to say, 'There lies an old fogey. Thank goodness he is gone!' "

Brother Suttle was highly in favor of the development of community recreation centers at Double Springs and Beaver Dam and supported the idea of a community recreation center sponsored by Gardner-Webb College. He favored athletic scholarships, not in preference to scholarships for ministers, valedictorians, and musicians, but on an equal basis with these people.

His methods and ideas of church building and community improvement were contagious. For instance, one of his kinsmen and life-long friends, the late John R. Dover, father of the present textile leaders, Charles and Jack Dover, believed so firmly in John's kind of religion that everywhere he built a textile mill, he also built a church, at least four or five in number. "Cousin" Charles and Jack continue their father's interest in church-centered community building.

While reflecting upon this condition in which the churches now have more of everything, John sometimes tells the story about the circuit riding ministers in frontier Michigan. The story is not original with him but it illustrates the point that one may get too much of anything.

This trusty old evangelist of the saddle had ridden to the very outpost of his district and had discovered a family of twelve in destitute circumstances. Most of them were half starved, poorly clothed and in severe need of this world's goods. He dismounted from his horse and administered to their needs as well as he could from his meager supplies, then decided that the least he could do was to offer a prayer. "O Lord, if we ever needed you, we need you now. This family here is pitifully poor. Please send a barrel of pork and a barrel of grits, and a barrel of flour and a barrel of pepper.

"O Lord, No! You know that's too much pepper!"

XIII

A College Saved Is A College Made

"OPEN MINE EYES."

Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

II Timothy 2:15

"Get up, Fred."

Thus a young minister, dusty and tired from riding twelve hours in a buggy, spoke to his gray horse as he left Boiling Springs to drive the nine miles back to Shelby with the \$2.75 he had been able to collect in a whole day for the new school.

"I drove my horse and buggy all over Cleveland and Rutherford counties during the fall of 1909 trying to get a little money for the new building which had been authorized by the Kings Mountain and Sandy Run Associations.

"Most of the gifts were nickels, dimes, and quarters with a few dollars and occasionally \$10. Very rarely was there a promise of \$100."

John Suttle was not in the county when the Kings Mountain Association first showed interest in organizing a new school at the Zoar meeting in 1903. After the

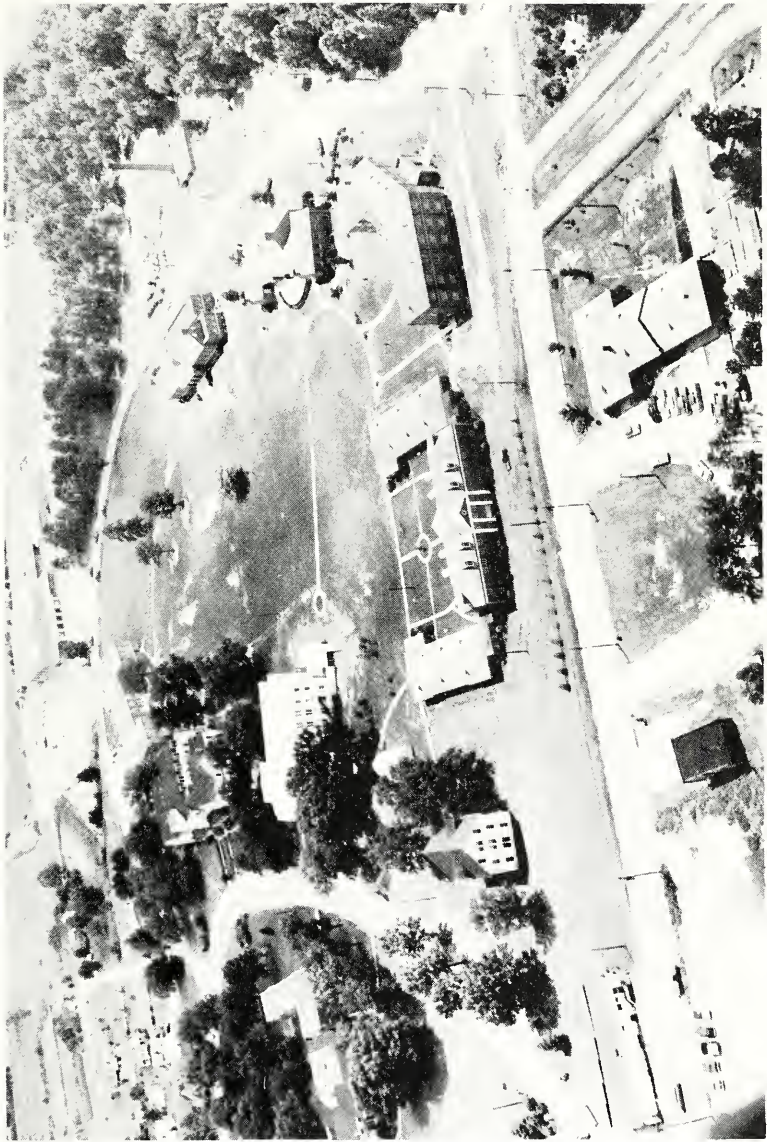
leaders had studied the problem and had worried over ways and means for five years and had finally located the school at Boiling Springs, John accepted a pastorate in the county, and from that time forward loved the school.

He has been identified more actively with its operation than any other man. He not only went after funds for the first building, but he has been active in every financial campaign for the high school and later for the Junior College. He has been on the Board of Trustees continuously since 1910 and was chairman of the Board during its greatest period of expansion in the early 40's. More than that, he kept it alive by keeping it open.

On two occasions, motions were made in the Board of Trustees to close the school; first, in the dark depression days of 1932 when the college was a mere four years old, funds were short, food was scarce, teachers could not be paid, and the struggling little college was burdened with \$20,000 indebtedness. Even then John Suttle was not dismayed. In an unusual all-night meeting of the Board of Trustees, Brother Suttle kept the question open for discussion hour after hour when the motion had been made to close the school. Finally at 4:00 a.m., when Trustees' wives were frantically phoning for information as to the whereabouts of their husbands, the Board voted to keep the school open for another year. "I had a feeling the Lord had changed somebody's mind during those long discussions and I felt it would be safe to call for the question." It was safe and the motion to close was defeated by one vote.

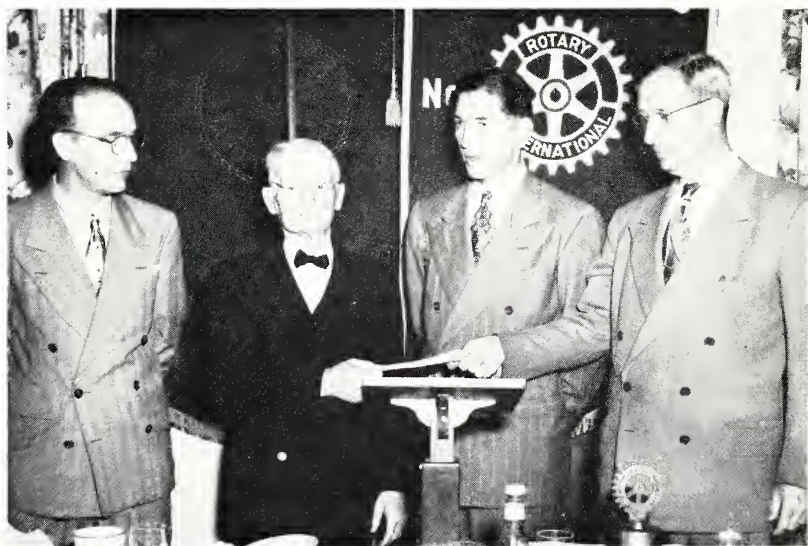
Again in 1936, the forces working for the closing of the school were not only poverty, lack of endowment and funds for operation, but the State Board of Education itself.

Through its spokesman, Dr. J. Henry Highsmith, the State Board of Education, in May 1936, sent a letter which was an ultimatum to the college to either become a standard institution or close its doors. He listed the following five reasons:



An Aerial View of Gardner-Webb Campus. The College expanded from single large building in left center.

*Suttle and
R. T. LeGrand, Sr.,
Textile Executive*



*Suttle at Rotary
with Frank Jordan, Dr. D. F. Moore, and Dr. P. L. Elliott.*

1. No stable income.
2. Inadequate library.
3. Inadequate laboratories for science.
4. Low salaries for teachers.

At that time teachers were getting \$36.00 a month plus room and board.

5. Training for the faculty. The proposed faculty for the year 1936-37 showed only one person had a Master's degree with the exception of the President and a teacher of Bible. Neither of these were paid members of the faculty.

Dr. Highsmith told the President and the Board of Trustees that unless these standards were met, the school would not be allowed to open in the fall.

John Suttle was not chairman of the Board at that time but was vice-chairman. In the absence of Judge E. Y. Webb, who was holding Federal District Court, Mr. Suttle did most of the presiding at the Board meetings in that eventful year.

It appeared at this time it would take at least \$10,000 to meet the minimum standards set up by the State Board of Education. So in the Board meeting that spring, John Suttle led members to contribute the sum of \$4,400 of which sum he pledged his church at Double Springs to pay \$500 and appointed other leaders in both the Kings Mountain and Sandy Run Associations to help raise the remainder. The money was raised and the college was saved.

Before World War I in the days from 1908 to 1912, Suttle continuously preached for better public schools, better churches, improved means of doing things, and especially for the high school which was training young ministers at Boiling Springs. At this time there were only two other high schools in Cleveland County, and the establishment of the academy at Boiling Springs along with the high school made three. The other two were at Shelby and Kings Mountain. In 1913, Brother John became moderator of the Kings Mountain Association and these forty years were dedicated not only to good preaching and building rural churches, but the upbuilding of Boiling Springs

School, which in 1928 became Boiling Springs Junior College and in 1942, became Gardner-Webb Junior College.

In the late 20's, Baptist leaders began to see that their new school could not withstand competition from the State of North Carolina which had organized nearly a dozen high schools in Cleveland County and had consolidated many of the smaller rural schools into these high schools. Their expenses were paid for by taxes. The number of students at Boiling Springs began to diminish in such proportion that it appeared the school would have to go out of business unless it was elevated to the ranks of a Junior College. The school got along fairly well until the beginning of the Great Depression. The early depression years saw the college struggle along with an ever increasing load of debt reaching approximately \$20,000 by 1932. From the record it appears that John attended almost every Board meeting. Occasionally there were special meetings, but the most dramatic story of his faith in helping to keep the college alive began in 1932.

Dr. J. Blaine Davis had been the first president and lasted only a couple of years. He was succeeded by Dr. Zeno Wall who held the position more or less on a temporary basis, since he was pastor of the large First Baptist Church at Shelby. He resigned after two years and John Suttle was influential in getting the Reverend J. L. Jenkins, pastor of the Boiling Springs Baptist Church, to accept the presidency.

Cotton was bringing five cents a pound. No one could sell farm products, and those who wanted such products had no money to buy them. Almost no one could afford to attend school and especially those who wanted to come to Boiling Springs could not pay. During the school year 1932-33, the college entered into an unusual contract with the teachers. In effect, it signed an agreement with the teachers to run the college on the condition that teachers pay all the expenses for food, books, supplies, heat, water, and lights, and then accept for their own pay what was left from fees and gifts.

This contract was outlined by Mr. Walter L. Hicks who was secretary of the Board of Trustees at that time and was put into effect by a motion by John Suttle. It left practically nothing to the teachers, but it did keep the college alive during those depression years. Except for the fact that the teachers worked for nothing, the college could not have operated at that time.

Even then, it could not have remained open except for a plan in which the Trustees borrowed money. A number of them endorsed the college's note for a loan at the First National Bank of Shelby. This note was called and came due on May 17, 1932. While Brother John did not have the money to pay his portion of the note, he went to his churches and got it. Interest on the note and some of the principal was paid. It was renewed for later payment.

An unusual situation developed in the fall of 1932 when business was so bad and payments to the college so poor that a few former teachers residing in Charlotte, North Carolina, and who had not been paid, were threatening to enter suit against the college for collection of their back salaries. This threw the Board of Trustees into somewhat of a quandary since it could not pay them. The Board did not even have enough money to hire a lawyer to fight the suit. Dr. W. A. Ayers, at that time pastor of the First Baptist Church of Forest City, discussed with Brother John a novel plan to meet this crisis.

It was suggested that if these teachers who needed back salary would get up a few students to come to the college and get them properly enrolled, that instead of the students paying the college they could pay the teachers who formerly had taught at Boiling Springs. In other words, if the students would pay a certain sum of money to the ex-teachers, they could come on to the college free and the new officers and the new set of teachers would accept the burden. The teachers were allowed to take credit for the sum of \$112.50 per student for the years 1932-33 if they could collect from that student, and that would be called payment of their back salary. Then the college

would teach the student, take care of him, and all he would have to pay here at Boiling Springs would be room and board but not the tuition charges during that year.

John Suttle saw in the beginning of the college that the authority for operating the enlarging school would have to be centrally located. In 1933, he gave the Board a motion that the President of the college be invested with the authority to see that the wishes of the Board were executed and to have power to organize all of the work pertaining to the college, including business management.

He also saw the value of tying the churches together in the interest of the college by getting students from these churches. In 1934, he made a motion that any church which gave as much as \$100 per year to the current expense of the college could select a student from the church who would receive a \$50 scholarship. If the church gave \$50, he would receive a \$25 scholarship, and if \$25, a \$12.50 scholarship.

Faith and morals were never neglected in those early days of the college, so in February of 1934, he was a member of the faculty committee which prepared an article of faith to be incorporated and appended to the teacher's contract as follows:

Contract: To be subscribed to by all teachers who teach in Boiling Springs College.

In consideration of my connection to the Boiling Springs College as a teacher I shall gladly subscribe to the following:

1. I am opposed to and will exert my influence against any and all forms of amusement that are detrimental to Christian influence and Christian living.
2. I shall give my full support to all religious organizations of the college and church.
3. I shall seek to create, encourage, and promote a distinctive Christian atmosphere in the college and on the campus.
4. I believe the Scriptures of the Old Testament to be divinely inspired in totality.
5. I believe the New Testament alone as revealing Salva-

tion and as the final authority of all matters of church polity and practice.

6. I believe Jesus Christ as revealed in the New Testament to be the Son of God and the Divine Saviour of all who truly accept Him as such.
7. I believe in the personality of the Holy Spirit, in His quickening power with the Spirit of the unregenerate moving to repentance and acceptance of Jesus as Saviour.
8. Since Spiritual Redemption was made available by the death, burial, and Resurrection of Jesus, I believe that every regenerate person should symbolize his own Salvation by being buried with Him in Baptism.
9. I believe the whole Bible to be the Word of God, infallible in authority, regenerate in power, divine in authorship and inexpressible in value.

During this year 1934, the Board voted to reimburse ministers and others who worked for the college to the extent of four cents a mile for travel. "I never collected a cent of this money for my travel," says John Suttle.

In May 1934, Mr. and Mrs. M. G. Pangle had failed to be re-elected and also had not been paid. John Suttle saw their predicament and made a motion that the fine services of the Pangles be recognized by the college and that it do what it could to aid them in securing a position that would pay enough money for them to live. The college could not do it at that time.

In the fall of 1934, the depression was still riding hard on the young college. Rains were beginning to force water through the roof into the classrooms and upon the students' beds. Brother John asked the Board for permission to go to the Association to ask that the churches furnish enough money to repair the roof of the building. He presented the matter to the Kings Mountain Association and the Reverend J. A. Hunnicutt of Cliffside presented it to the Sandy Run Association. The money was brought in. In March, 1935, John Suttle was still convinced that the program had to be carried to the laymen. He asked the Board to present the indebtedness of the college to an

annual laymen's banquet and ask each Association to plan to get the debts paid by the end of the year.

The Reverend J. L. Jenkins resigned as President in the early spring of 1935 and there was no immediate possibility of finding a successor. By the influence of John Suttle, Mr. Jenkins served on through the spring, and then in May, moved that the college elect Professor A. C. Lovelace, after a series of conferences had been held with him and he was found to be willing to take the Presidency.

In January 1936, Brother John made the motion, seconded by C. T. Plybon, that the finance committee proceed and be instructed and authorized to complete the arrangement for securing a loan of \$12,000 for liquidating all the old and past indebtedness of the college on a compromise basis. One of his suggestions to increase endowment at that time was to ask members of the Board of Trustees and other friends of the college to take out insurance policies to the extent of \$1,000 each, making over to the college the proceeds of these policies in the event of their death. "I did not ask any of them to die," he chuckled.

On May 7, 1936, he presided over the meeting at the First Baptist Church in Shelby to consider the letter from the State Board of Education which had been sent by Dr. Highsmith under the direction of Clyde A. Erwin, State Superintendent of Public Instruction; and James E. Hillman, director of the Division of Professional Service. A committee, composed of Attorney B. T. Falls, G. V. Hawkins, J. U. Rollins, Mrs. Rush Stroup, A. C. Lovelace, and J. A. Hunnicutt, was appointed to consider the matter and to report at the annual meeting at Boiling Springs College on May 20.

The Board met on May 18 instead of waiting until May 20, and the committee unanimously agreed that the college could not open in the coming fall unless certain conditions were met. They would have to raise at least \$6,000 in cash and in addition, they would have to raise the standards of the laboratory, library, teachers' salaries, and all of

the other detail items mentioned in the State Board of Education report. At that time pastors of the leading churches, members of the Board, and other friends subscribed a total of \$4,400 of which John Suttle's church at Double Springs offered to pay \$500 toward the liquidation of the indebtedness and to begin the new standardization and equipment program.

In June 1936, J. H. Quinn resigned after a long tenure as chairman of the Board. Judge E. Y. Webb of Shelby was elected to succeed him but in the next half dozen years, John Suttle did most of the presiding since Judge Webb was away holding court sessions most of the time.

On June 3, 1936, President Lovelace, the Reverend J. L. Jenkins, the Reverend Rush Padgett, E. B. Hamrick, and John Suttle went to Raleigh to talk to Mr. Highsmith about how to keep the school open. They came to an agreement which essentially contained these proposals.

1. That an income of \$10,000 annually be guaranteed either by the Kings Mountain or Sandy Run Associations, or both.
2. That five teachers with Master's degrees be employed to head the departments of English, Mathematics, Science, Social Studies and Foreign Languages.
3. That salaries of the teachers be equal to those paid to Class A teachers in high schools according to state salary schedules, plus 25%. This would be a total of \$1,215 per year on the basis of nine months plus the 25%.
4. That the laboratory equipment up to the value not less than \$2,000 be provided for each subject in science taught.
5. That a full time librarian be employed.

It was left mainly to John Suttle, the moderator of the Kings Mountain Association and a member of the Board, to see that this \$10,000 was raised. It was raised the first year and each subsequent year until the college was admitted to the Baptist State Convention Family of Colleges.

The simple statement in the minutes of the May meeting of the Board of Trustees that B. T. Falls made a motion for the school to suspend operations and which was sec-

ended by S. H. Austell, is certainly not indicative of the tension and the feeling in the Board of Trustees and among friends of the college at that time. The school had managed to survive for almost thirty years and a great number of friends felt that it must not die at this time.

Just as the vote was about to be taken, the dietitian, Mrs. Lillian Ritch, called the Board to dinner. They went downstairs and dined sumptuously upon cabbage, corn bread and buttermilk and after coming back to the meeting in the afternoon, found they felt much better toward Christian education, and the motion to close the school was defeated.

John Suttle has not believed in subsidizing athletics or in encouraging the professional athlete to come to college. However, as early as 1936, he did support a movement in which athletes who were also good students would receive as much as \$25 per year credit on a scholarship if he could play one sport well. If he could play two or more sports he would receive a credit of \$50 per year. This motion was approved by the entire Board.

"I believe in encouraging young men to build strong healthy bodies and to do their best whether they are in school, in business, or wherever they are. It is just as important for the college to be fair in dealing with young men and young women in matters of improving their bodies as well as their minds."

On May 18, 1937, John Suttle offered to the Board a proposition that he and Mrs. Suttle would give each year a medal to the student showing the best understanding and the greatest advancement in the study of the Bible. A lad named Fred Graham Piercy was awarded the medal the first year. Since that year, they have given this gold medal to the best Bible student and Mr. Suttle has been present on each occasion to personally present the medal to the student.

Walter L. Hicks, who was secretary to the Board of Trustees during the dark decade from '32 to '42 said this

Suttle and Huggins
 Brother John with M. A. Huggins, veteran General Secretary of the North Carolina Baptist State Convention.



Suttle at First Church, Shelby
 Brother John talks with city preachers, Dr. Zeno Wall, Reverend Harlan Harris, and Roland Leath.

about Brother John, "He would never agree that the college should be closed and was always optimistic about its future. He emphatically stated that it should not die, that it was doing a good job for this day and time and especially for the amount of financial support it was receiving.

"He kept the meetings enlivened by his pep and wit, and his deadly serious earnestness. Also, when he was presiding, he kept it moving and kept the issues at stake in the minds of the members of the Board. He would not let little personal differences of opinion or differences of approach to the problem interfere with the real job of running the college."

One of the ways he kept the college open was a constant attention to the matter of keeping favorable people on the Board of Trustees. Among these people, many of whom were from his own churches, and whose influence he knew he could depend upon, were Mrs. John Wacaster of Waco; J. C. Washburn of Double Springs; G. V. Hawkins of South Shelby; J. U. Rollins of Sandy Run; A. V. Washburn of Double Springs; J. W. Costner of Double Shoals; S. H. Austell of New Hope; and others.

During this trying period the college changed presidents six different times. Each time a new man was drafted or persuaded to take the presidency John Suttle had no little influence in trying to get the right man and getting him to work for little salary, or nothing, so to speak, in order that the school might be kept going. These presidents were Dr. Zeno Wall, the Reverend J. L. Jenkins, Professor A. C. Lovelace, Dr. George J. Burnett, the Reverend J. L. Jenkins again, and the Reverend J. R. Cantrell.

"Cousin John, you have been to me like the shelter of a big rock in a weary land," O. Max Gardner said to the wiry little preacher one day in 1944.

John's cousin who was speaking to him on that September day was none other than the Honorable O. Max Gardner, former Governor of North Carolina, friend and advisor of President Roosevelt, financial genius, millionaire and by far the most astute political leader, statesman, dip-

lomat, Baptist layman, the state has produced in at least half a century.

The miracle had happened! Governor Gardner had become interested in Boiling Springs College. He had become interested in Christian education. He had dedicated himself to the task of making a first rate institution of the 35 year old school. With his money, influence, and magnificent personality he had succeeded in enlisting the support of hundreds of friends, and in exchange for this support, the trustees, in 1942, had changed the name from Boiling Springs College to Gardner-Webb Junior College, Inc.

The Webb part of the name stood for the maiden name of his wife, Faye Webb Gardner, and other illustrious members of this pioneer family of Cleveland and Rutherford counties. These included two outstanding Baptist ministers and leaders and two very prominent jurists. Judge James L. Webb for many years was Dean of the Bench of North Carolina Superior Court, and Judge E. Y. Webb was head of the Western Federal District Court.

No one will ever know exactly what caused Governor Gardner to become interested in the school. It probably was a combination of factors. He was a native of Cleveland County and his parents were natives of Rutherford County. His father was a leading country doctor. He was a first cousin to John Suttle and was closely related to the leading family of both counties, the Blantons, Suttles, Wrays, Hamricks, Greens, and others.

For many years, Max had been a teacher of a large Men's Bible Class at the First Baptist Church in Shelby. He had always been a deeply religious and dedicated individual, but of late years his activities in politics and state affairs had taken him away from his home county. Through the efforts and prayers of John Suttle, A. W. McMurry, Dr. Zeno Wall, Mrs. Rush Stroup, Horace Easom, and a number of other friends of the college, the problems of the Baptist school finally had been laid on his heart, so that

in 1942 he publicly announced his support and intention to go "all the way".

From then on things began to hum. The college was reorganized, the charter rewritten, and steps were laid not only to build a good school but to provide adequate endowment and to make Gardner-Webb a member of the Baptist Family of Colleges recognized and supported by the Baptist State Convention.

Suffice to say that all of this and more was done. By the time Mr. Gardner died in 1948, the endowment had grown to \$260,000; there were increased funds for scholarships and other grants to students, the value of the college plant had been increased over \$1,000,000 and prospects were bright for continued expansion. At the time of his death, Mr. Gardner had been appointed Ambassador to the Court of St. James, but had given the college assurance that he would continue to lend his support and influence toward making it first among Junior Colleges of the South.

O. Max had been influential in bringing to the campus Dr. Phil L. Elliott, a native of the mountains of Western North Carolina, with wide experience in administration and teaching and who, in 1942, was with the English Department in Western Carolina Teacher's College at Cullowhee. Dr. Elliott and John Suttle soon became friends and have helped each other mutually to improve rural churches and to teach college students from rural areas.

Max Gardner's organizing genius had already performed two miracles in North Carolina. He was governor of the state from 1928 to 1932 and was called upon during the first year of the great depression to save the credit of the state and then to save the state. By a series of brilliant maneuvers he was able to rearrange the bond structure and indebtedness of the state in such a manner as not to default or lose credit with New York banks. Also, his "Live at Home Program" among the 75 per cent rural areas of North Carolina enabled the people to weather the

depression by having enough food to live on whether or not they had money to buy.

His second great contribution as governor was the reorganization of the State University, North Carolina State College and Woman's College into a "Greater University". After his term as governor, he had gone to Washington to practice law where he was counsel for some of the greatest firms in the United States including textiles, aviation, movies, railways, and heavy industrials.

John and Max were both alike and different. In many respects they complemented each other. John was short, thin, wiry, and full of dry wit. Cousin Max was big, tall, exceedingly handsome, and dynamic, with a commanding personality. Both were born leaders, both went to the top in their professions. They had high mutual admiration for each other.

One day John and Max were talking. John said, "Max, how did you ever figure out how you were going to be governor?" Max replied, "Well, you know the machine beat me in 1920 when I was running against Cameron Morrison. I decided right then and there that if I couldn't lick them I would join them." So he did join the machine and by 1928 was so much a leader in North Carolina Democratic politics that for the next twenty years from that time he was "The Machine".

"I have sometimes thought of my race for governor being like the man who was out bear hunting. The bear got after him and he ran and ran and thought sure the bear was going to catch him. He could almost feel the hot breath of the beast blowing on the back of his neck.

"Suddenly he ran out of the woods into an open field. In the middle of the field was a big tree, and he thought to himself if he could just get to that tree and climb it, he would be safe from the bear. When he got to the tree he found the first limb was forty feet from the ground and the tree was too big to climb.

"However, the case was urgent so he stooped down and jumped. When one of his friends asked him if he made it,

he replied, 'Well, no, I didn't catch the limb going up but I was able to catch it coming down'."

Max used to tell this story to illustrate how he missed being governor in 1920 but got it in 1928 and stated that any young man who set a goal for himself could do the same if he planned well enough and worked hard enough.

John Suttle's contribution in leadership to the campaign for new funds, after the college was reorganized in 1942, is reflected in some correspondence a little later to A. W. McMurry, chairman of the Board of Trustees of Gardner-Webb, in which he said, "There are three reasons why people should be asked to buy war bonds and make them payable to Gardner-Webb College:

1. To build a standard Junior College, a college which would care for and train many people including veterans after the war.
2. Givers would be entitled to a tax deduction for such a gift to a charitable institution.
3. Gifts of such bonds would result in dividends for students in this section for all times."

He urged that all people, rich and poor, children and adults alike, have an opportunity to give and make an investment for the future.

Again in the campaign of 1949, in a new drive to raise \$85,000, Brother Suttle said, "This campaign is one more of the many steps already completed and to be completed in the rise of Gardner-Webb College as one of North Carolina's effective Junior Colleges. Without facilities the college cannot serve the boys and girls who need it. The ideal part of any college consists of its service; the practical part consists of facilities with which to serve. In my judgment this latest campaign for the liquidation of a dormitory debt means for Gardner-Webb the practical facilities for ideal service."

As late as May 1957 he took part in the graduation service of students at Gardner-Webb College, and it was

announced he had attended every graduation service since the very first one, which totaled 50 in all.

A section of the girls' dormitory built shortly after the war proudly bears the name of John W. Suttle. The six churches he was serving at that time, Double Shoals, New Bethel, Patterson Grove, Double Springs, Lawndale, and Beaver Dam, together with his family and friends raised \$20,000 to give his name to this new dormitory. A group of some 25 college girls now occupy this particular section.

The sum of approximately \$6,000 was donated by Mr. and Mrs. Lester O. Hamrick of Lattimore to help in the landscaping and beautification of the campus surrounding the new dormitory and other buildings. Approximately \$500 from the estate of another former member, Mr. Matt London of the New Bethel Church, came in to complete the \$20,000 necessary to erect the dormitory.

Just the privilege of giving a medal to the better Bible student is enough for the Suttles, but expressions like the following from William C. Bearden who won the prize in 1950 makes him feel better. "I would like to express my deep appreciation to you for the Bible medal awarded me at Gardner-Webb College last week. It certainly is a beautiful medal and words are inadequate to express my gratitude for it. It certainly was a surprise for me to get it. I have been studying at Gardner-Webb two years and enjoyed every moment of it. In fact, I didn't think it possible for me to love a school as I do that great college. We owe much to you and all the others who fought to keep that school alive and make it what it is today. I do not hesitate to say that it is the best school we have in the state and I love them all.

"Many thanks again for the medal. I shall always be proud of it and remember you good people. We desire your prayers for us as we continue in our work here for the Lord."

Mention the Peabody Report to John Suttle and the gray hair almost turns to red again, and he gets the old time flash of fire in his eyes. "It may be that the Peabody

Report coming when it did and the way it did provided the necessary stimulus to rally our people to keep the school open at that time."

What happened was that sometime between 1936 and 1940, while the college was being studied very severely by the North Carolina Department of Education—especially by Dr. J. Henry Highsmith—a group of educators from Peabody College in Nashville, Tennessee, was invited to come to Boiling Springs and make a study of this small college.

The conclusion of this group of educators was that the college should be closed because:

1. It was too small.
2. It was improperly located.
3. It did not have the natural resources to be continued.
4. Its friends and supporters were not supporting it in the manner they ought to.

"Time has proved that the Peabody reporters did not know what they were talking about," says Brother Suttle. "Perhaps they did and they were certainly right at the time, but it made us think about what we needed to do and we got busy and kept it alive and kept it going."

The Reverend J. L. Jenkins spoke to the Baptist State Convention that same year about the plight of the college. He expressed the situation very aptly before the convention, and his remarks prompted one of the friends of Chowan Junior College to make an equally impassioned speech for that school. They were trying to persuade the convention not to close Gardner-Webb, and at the same time, to rally around and reopen Chowan.

Said Mr. Jenkins, "This is the first time in the history of Christian Education that an attempted abortion resulted in the birth of twins."

"Bubbles" is the name of the college annual. In 1941, this annual was dedicated to John Suttle. Robert Brooks of Mooresboro, who is now on the editorial staff for the Raleigh "News and Observer", was editor at the time. State Senator, Robert Morgan of Shelby, was Business

Manager. The dedicatory note reads, "For more than fifty years the Reverend John W. Suttle has held the high place in the hearts of Christians throughout North Carolina. His tireless efforts as a pastor, his loyal devotion and inestimable service to Christian Education and his Christ-like life among his fellow men will cause his name to be highly revered long after this small tribute has been forgotten."

In all his churches, Brother John always told his members that the time to give flowers to people is while they are living. "If you love your mother, tell her so today. Give her a rose; give her a hug and kiss or tell your father you admire him. After they are gone it will be too late."

In like manner, the hundreds and thousands of friends and admirers in the two Associations where he has labored these 65 years have attempted to set up a fitting memorial for John Suttle in the Suttle Memorial Endowment for Gardner-Webb College. This endowment fund is ultimately expected to reach the sum of \$100,000.

Funds from this endowment will be used for the support of the Gardner-Webb College Church Community Development Department, now being ably led by the Reverend W. Lawson Allen.

How fitting for a man who has always worked with rural churches in small communities, with compact groups, to have for a memorial a department in the college which he helped found; a college which has for its supreme goal the improvement and development of those same communities, to fulfill their destiny in a new century, in a new day, and in a new way.

This department is carrying Christian Education to these communities, seeking to develop around the church as a center a wholesome community in which the total needs of all the people are met, in a self-satisfying program of church activities, Sunday School, Training Union, Woman's Missionary Society, Boy Scouts, the various clubs, and, of course, the weekly worship services. What a glorious tribute to this "good man of religion—a parson in the country".

XIV

A Baptist Asbury Reaches The Top

"WHERE HE LEADS ME I WILL FOLLOW"

Lovest thou me? Then feed my flock.

John 21:15

A revolution was in the making in the ranks of rural ministers and delegates to the State Convention which was meeting in Winston-Salem in 1947. They wanted a leader, they needed a spokesman; one of their very own. For more than fifty years, the convention had met every year and had elected a city preacher or city layman to head the convention. It was time for a change!

John W. Suttle—of Shelby, North Carolina, age 75—pastor of five rural churches at that time, was the man. He was nominated and elected to the office over three city preachers. Incidentally, these were three of his good friends: Dr. F. O. Mixon of Raleigh, the Reverend Julian S. Hopkins of High Point, and Dr. Ralph Herring of Winston-Salem.

John was prepared for the job. He has been a leader of Baptists all of his long life and productive ministry. Twice he had been vice-president of the Convention and had

been a member of the General Board for more than twenty years. At various times he had been a member of high placed committees and boards appointed to do important convention work. In addition, he had attended every meeting of the State Convention since 1890 with the exception of four, two of which he was away at the seminary.

Even the oldest convention goers could not remember when a pastor from the country, a minister of rural churches, had been elected president of the convention. Fifty to 75 years ago nearly all of the preachers in North Carolina were in towns small enough for pastors to be called "country preachers".

Some unrest had been developing for a number of years among the pastors and representatives to the convention from the rural areas. Of the nearly three thousand churches, over two thousand of them were in the rural areas and pastored by men who lived in the country. "We expect the convention to meet in the cities and we expect the city ministers to be the best leaders and to be elected most of the time, but it does not follow that they must elect a president and all of the officers all of the time. We need a spokesman," said one of the prominent rural ministers.

John was the logical choice since he had been hailed time and time again as "dean of rural ministers of the South" in a number of magazines and articles from the Sunday School Board, from the Daily Press, and from other publications. At the time of his nomination he had already served 57 years in rural churches and was head and shoulders above any other candidate from the country considering age, experience, and ability. Unknown to Brother John, a number of caucuses had been held by a great number of interested groups all over the state and in the words of one of the young pastors, "We were ready for them city slickers".

After the first vote was taken and Suttle was so far ahead of the other candidates their nominators withdrew their names and asked that the vote be unanimous for

Suttle. He succeeded Dr. C. C. Warren of Charlotte and was succeeded by Dr. F. O. Mixon of Raleigh who was also elected his vice-president that year. Other vice-presidents were the Reverend M. L. Bannister of Oxford and the Reverend W. C. Reed of Kinston. Charles B. Deane, veteran secretary and congressman, was elected to continue in office as recording secretary.

On the same day Suttle became president of the convention, Horace Easom of Shelby was elected to become director of the Convention's fund to remove Wake Forest to Winston-Salem. This great task was to consist of raising approximately \$6,000,000 of which \$1,500,000 was to be raised by the churches. Mr. Easom continued in this job until the \$1,500,000 from the churches was in sight.

Floods of letters, telegrams, and messages of congratulation came to Mr. Suttle while still at Winston-Salem and later when he had returned home. O. Max Gardner, a cousin and life-long friend and admirer of Brother Suttle, who then was in Washington preparing to go as Ambassador to Great Britain, gave a note to the Associated Press saying of him: "He has never been a big pastor nor held a big pastorate. He has always preferred to serve the smaller groups, the smaller people and to give them a part of that faith, that religion, and that devotion to hard work and integrity which has made for him so rich a life."

With spritely step and his usual smile and good cheer, he mounted the rostrum in 1948 at Charlotte and addressed the Convention hall of 2,000 pastors and delegates. He said something like this, "When I was elected president of this body over at Winston-Salem, I overheard someone make the unfortunate remark that I was a little too old and too near the retiring age to serve as active president of a busy Baptist State Convention.

"Let me tell you what I told him. I said, 'Young man, I hold five prayer meetings a week and visit a hundred patients in the hospital every day. I preach three sermons every Sunday and go to some sort of church meeting every night in the week. If a man who can do that is too old

then you can take my place'." The Convention took his remarks in stride and extended sympathy, adulation, and praise to the veteran minister. From then on throughout the rest of the Convention, he had no difficulty in getting their complete attention.

His election in Winston-Salem in 1947 followed his delivery of a sermon on the general theme, "Christ is the Answer". Brother John does not have a copy of that sermon but he does remember that his text was from Psalms, "I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills" and proceeded on the theme that if we have a high goal, a high position in life, a high sense of duty, that from this vantage point we can ourselves see the world; see Satan and how to fight him, and see our opportunities and our responsibilities. "We lift the people to the Word of God and the way to lift them is through prayer and hard work," he said.

Following his election he got numerous calls to visit in nearby cities and also in Virginia and South Carolina. That year he preached at Wake Forest College, the Catawba River Association near Louisburg, to the State General Association in Roanoke, Virginia, the South Carolina State Baptist Convention at Columbia, and at Ridgecrest, North Carolina. He was invited to the South Carolina meeting by one of his old friends, Dr. R. C. Campbell, a native of this section and at that time vice-president of the Southern Baptist Convention.

He told the South Carolina ministers his famous "pepper" story. It seems that a very prominent old minister from the country who was quite eccentric carried a bottle of pickled peppers with him everywhere he went. One day he went to town and was having his lunch in a restaurant when a traveling salesman came in and sat down. He looked around, saw the peppers, picked them up and put a little of the sauce on his meat and started to eat one of the peppers.

The pepper was so hot a conversation was started. "You

mean to say you are a preacher and that you carry these peppers around with you?" he asked.

"Yes," was the reply.

"Do you by any chance ever preach on hell's fire?" asked the salesman.

"Occasionally. Why do you ask?" came from the minister.

"Well, I just want to tell you. You are the first preacher I ever saw who carries his samples with him."

As an ambassador from rural churches in 1947 to 1949, Brother Suttle told most of these gatherings that the real secret of succeeding in rural work lies in training leaders and in giving the people a real opportunity for service. "Many country preachers have more fun than you city preachers. Many a time I go into a city church and see why a man who was reared in the country is very unhappy. He is laboring under the problems of a city, under his own problems, and under the church problems. God have mercy on my poor city brother!"

"The program of the church ought to be the same in the country as in the city. The main problem is to teach the people, enlist them, enroll them, and if they are lost, to win them. Country churches have to erect buildings, install heating plants, care for the buildings and grounds, organize Sunday Schools, Training Unions, Missionary Societies, and Brotherhoods; they must enlist the talent of the church in the choir just as they do in the city church.

"The once-a-month preaching is gone forever. The day of the buggy-driving, overnight, often-visiting country preacher is also gone forever."

During his term of office John received excellent co-operation from all of the ministers and leaders of Baptists in North Carolina. Dr. Mixon served faithfully as First Vice-president and the following year was elected President to succeed John. General Secretary Huggins invited him to attend all of the meetings of the Executive Committee and offered to furnish secretarial help which, of

course, Brother John needed for all the correspondence. In all these years as a rural pastor, he never had a secretary.

"I did have a little typewriter which I had used myself for nearly fifty years but, of course, it did not take the place of a secretary. Dr. Warren of Charlotte had his own secretary and did not need the Convention to furnish one."

Quick to applaud the election of their leader to the highest office in the convention, the general board of the Kings Mountain Association wrote a resolution in the first meeting after the election. After a general statement they resolved the following:

1. That we express our hearty concurrence and appreciation of the action of the convention in electing Brother Suttle.
2. That we show our moderator our continued love and cooperation, and our willingness to help him bear his heavy responsibility.
3. That a copy of these resolutions be spread upon our record here, a copy be given to the local paper, and a copy to be sent to the Biblical Recorder and a final copy given to Brother Suttle.

The convention could not have picked a more natural born leader than John Suttle. He has attended nearly half of the sessions held by that body since it was organized in 1830. He knew leaders from nearly every Association. He was personally acquainted with most of the old timers who had been going to the convention for many, many years. He knew the problems of both city and rural churches. His personal friends had been convention leaders for more than two generations. Among them was John A. Oates of Fayetteville, a leader and scholar and very intelligent person who wrote the book, *North Carolina Baptists*. When he attended the Convention he dressed like Lord Chesterfield.

Another prominent Baptist Mr. Suttle used to see at conventions was Needham B. Broughton. He was the uncle of the late Governor Broughton and was a leading educator in Raleigh. One of the largest schools in the capital city was named for him.

Dr. B. W. Spillman of Kinston was known over the South as "The Sunday School Man" and used to visit Mr. Suttle at Smithfield. He was the biggest and fattest Baptist in the South and by the aid of his exceptionally good humor once wrote a book entitled, *Laugh and Grow Fat*. Dr. Spillman was very fond of practical jokes and once wired the railroad to hold the train for thirty minutes "for a large party". The conductor was quite mad when Dr. Spillman arrived and as he boarded the train puffing, said, "I am quite a large party, don't you think?"

In the early days John was acquainted with O. L. Stringfield, one of the founders of Meredith College and a great worker for Christian Education in North Carolina.

Dr. John E. White of Clayton was at one time Corresponding Secretary of the Southern Baptist Convention and a close friend to Suttle while he was in Johnston County. There were two prominent Johnstons from Robeson County: Livingston, who became secretary of the Baptist State Convention; and Archibald who, for many years, was editor of "Charity and Children", a paper published at the Baptist Orphanage. Others included Walt N. Johnson, secretary of the Convention; Dr. Columbus Durham, a native of Cleveland County and also a secretary; Dr. J. H. Mills, founder of the Orphanage; Dr. Charles E. Maddry, general secretary of the Board.

One of John's close friends, who at one time was president of the Convention, was Dr. R. H. Marsh of Lexington. "He was a very large, portly and dignified man and one of the best presiders the convention ever had," says Suttle.

From time to time John had known other prominent Baptists in this state. Among them were W. N. Jones, J. B. Carlisle, W. C. Dowd, I. M. Mercer, J. Clyde Turner, Dr. W. L. Poteat, Honorable R. N. Sims, Dr. Forrest C. Feezor, Dr. I. G. Greer, Dr. Ralph A. Herring, Dr. C. C. Warren, and Dr. F. O. Mixon. Many of these preceded him as president of the convention.

Mr. Suttle has a high regard for the Southern Baptist

Convention and also for the Sunday School Board. For many years he has known and corresponded with a great number of the leaders in many of the states in the Southern Baptist Convention. Not too long ago he had the privilege to attend a meeting of the Sunday School Board and was greatly thrilled.

"I became a minister before the Sunday School Board was founded. From this seed thought planted since that time this Board has had such a flourishing growth until it is astoundingly potential and limitless in its uplook, intake, and outreach. It has a heart that pulsates with a warmth of compassion.

"I have been impressed that its organization is fast and highly efficient. Its program is both extensive and intensive. Its service and influence is broad and far reaching. Its depth of purpose is deep and broad; its spirit is great. Its message is one of salvation, information, and inspiration. It challenges me with a clarion voice."

Suttle then remarked upon how he had known Dr. J. M. Frost and had watched him lead the Board in its early days and how Dr. I. J. VanNess had built upon that foundation. Then, how Dr. T. L. Holcomb led in a phenomenal program of service to 6,500,000 Southern Baptists in country, village, town and city churches, and how their successors in office have seen that growth spiral ever outward and upward until now more than 8,000,000 members are enrolled in all of the 31,000 churches in the convention and that total gifts amount to something more than \$300,000,000 annually.

"To be a member of this huge organization is an honor, and to be a leader of any one of its churches is a great responsibility," says Leader John Suttle.

One of his favorite stories concerning leadership involves the rather stuffy old man who came puffing and blowing up to a filling station driving a Model "T" Ford.

"Have you seen anything of a group of young people going up this road in a brand new car?"



ELDER
JOSEPH SUTTLE



ELDER
G. W. ROLLINS

These two pioneer Baptist leaders were his earliest inspiration for the ministry.

Said the filling station man: "They passed here about fifteen minutes ago and were running pretty fast."

"I'd better get going. I've got to catch them. I'm their leader." Says Brother John, "If a person is a leader he has got to lead."

Josephus Daniels, former Secretary of the Navy, Advisor to Democratic Presidents, and editor of the powerful and influential Raleigh "News and Observer", wrote a column thus:

THE CLEVELAND OLIGARCHY

by The Rhamkatte Roaster

"I sees in the pa-pers that there wuz a big fite in the Baptist State Convention as to who wud boss the deep-water Baptists fer the comin' year when hundreds ov delegates from Chowan to Chimney Rock met in Winston-Salem this week," said the Old Codger this morning.

"Three city doctors ov divinity wuz in the race fer president an' all wuz defeated by a rube parson from Cleveland County. I shore wuz glad to see that we farmers, who feeds the cities, got recognition in a 75-year-old circuit rider, who hain't never preached in a city church, who hain't no D.D. or LL.D., but just a sort ov George Truett preacher who air close to the folks.

"It may have been in his favor that he belonged to what Cam Morrison used to call 'the Cleveland County oligarchy,' what has furnished more fellers for big offices than any other county in recent years. Here air sum ov the list: Judge Jim Webb, Judge Yates Webb, State Auditor Dixon, Governor an' Ambassador Max Gardner, Speaker Odus Mull, Representative in State an' Republic, Governor an' Senator Hoey, and Clarence an' Tom an' Delia Dixon, an' Major an' other Shencks, to mention only a few who seemed to be predestined to hold public office.

"Ye'd better not go up agin 'the Cleveland Oligarchy' in church or state if one ov 'em air a candidate. They air predestined to git the big jobs."

The above article was in 1947 after Suttle's election.

The Old Codger cogitated again in 1948 after Brother John presided at Charlotte.

A BAPTIST ASBURY

by The Rhamkatte Roaster

"Three cheers an' a tiger fer Country Preacher Suttle, 75 years young, who wuz elected president ov the Baptist State Convention. Sum folks thort he wuz too old fer the job an' that a city feller who preaches only one or two times a week ort fer to have bin elected in order to git pep in the head ov the Baptist forces. But after hearin' President Suttle, pastor ov six country churches, they seed no mistook wuz made!

'Thus spoke the Old Codger this morning as he dropped in to say that Rhamkatters, Methodists as well as Baptists, were glad a so-called Rube had been honored. Asked what the country parson said that proved he was the wise choice, the Old Codger replied:

"Diddent ye read Jane Hall's story in the Nuisance Disturber?" Ye Editor had not. "That accounts fer yer lack ov knowledge, but I'll enliten yer ignorance. Here air what Jane reported Parson Suttle as sayin':

"'I've missed only four meetings of this convention in the last sixty years, and two of those years I was in the seminary.

"'I have no idea what you expect me to do but I am going to do it.

"'Yesterday, after my election, a young pastor came to me and intimated that you gave me this office because I was so old. He looked at me rather pityingly. I must admit I'm pitying the convention.

"'No man in the convention would dare to keep up with me. Last Sunday I preached three sermons, taught two Sunday School classes, and drove fifty miles. That night I slept like a baby. I do that sort of thing every Lord's Day and keep busy four nights in the week, too. Every time I come to Shelby I visit 50 to 100 sick people.

"'And that young fellow called me an old man.'

"The last remark wuz in mock indignation."

The Old Codger, after reading the above, commented:

"I wishes evry public officer, preacher, teacher, etc., who air axin' to be retired at 60 or 65 an' rust out wud larn sumthin' from this country parson. He air the 1947 Asbury ov the Baptist persuasion. Ye recollect Asbury rode 270,000 miles on hoss-back an' preached 16,275 sermons."

XV

Story Of The Prayer Meeting That Was Never Held

“YIELD NOT TO TEMPTATION”

*Look not thou upon the wine when it is red—at the
last it biteth like a serpent and stingeth like an adder.*

Proverbs 23:31-32

“Mr. Moderator. I move our church go on record opposing the saloon in our town and that we ask the owner to close it.”

“Second the motion.”

“All in favor, say ‘aye’.”

A chorus of ayes resounded at the little church in Palmerville and the moderator announced, “The ayes have it. I will personally tell Mr. Blank, the operator of the saloon, of our action and ask him to close it by Saturday night.”

Mr. Blank, the owner and operator of the Palmerville saloon in the year 1894, looked at Professor Eddins, the speaker, in front of him. Such a man, he thought, must have a lot of nerve coming to him, the most prominent, most influential, and wealthiest man in town. Said Professor Eddins, “Mr. Blank, our church has decided that your saloon will have to be closed. We like you and like your family and would like you to help us build this com-

munity. On Saturday night we are going to have a prayer meeting. At the prayer meeting we are going to ask God to save you or kill you. If your saloon is closed by Saturday night, we won't hold the meeting. If you will close it and get the liquor out of town, we will wait until Sunday for the prayer meeting and then we'll offer a prayer of thanksgiving."

Mr. Blank laughed at the professor and firmly told him that he would keep the saloon open as long as he wanted to and that no little teacher or member of his church could tell him how to run his business.

That was Monday. Every day that week until about Thursday Mr. Blank laughed with his friends and neighbors about the threat of a prayer meeting. About bedtime Thursday he became apprehensive. He knocked on Professor Eddins' door and said, "Teacher, I have come to tell you that I don't want you folks to hold that prayer meeting. I heard that John Suttle and old Sister Burch are going to be at the meeting and I honestly believe that if they ask the Lord to kill me, He'll listen to them and do it. How can I stop the meeting?"

Brother Eddins was impressed but firm and said, "Mr. Blank, if the saloon is closed and all of that liquor is out of town Saturday night, there will be no meeting." All day Friday and Saturday wagons and carts came for their consignments and by Saturday night a sign on the door said, "CLOSED".

It was into this revolutionary state of affairs that Brother John came to Palmerville, became pastor of the little church and figuratively, at least, put an "open" sign over the church door. About a year after committee action had closed the saloon, John reported the owner was happily and joyously converted and joined his church where he became an excellent member.

No one has fought the liquor traffic more constantly, defiantly, or successfully in North Carolina than John Suttle. He is very certain that it is morally wrong to make, sell, or use alcoholic beverages. He has some very

well defined ideas about the pathogenesis of becoming a drunkard. He has seen it happen in real life in at least four generations.

"When we finally define our rights as individuals we will solve the liquor problem." He also says, "Fines never will control the making or sale of liquor because a fine is just a cheap license to go ahead."

He is unalterably opposed to liquor stores since he says, "The profit motive is only added to the patient's craving, to make the problem even bigger."

Mr. Suttle's life has been one of strictest temperance and a long battle against the liquor traffic. He has been one of the strongest supporters of legal prohibition of alcoholic liquors. He got this trait honestly because his grandfather, Elder Joseph Suttle, was one of the leaders in the Kings Mountain Association when the original fights for prohibition and temperance were begun. He recalls hearing his father tell about how the Association was divided during the year 1850-51 over a resolution passed at the High Shoals Baptist Church when the Association met there.

It so happened that a great number of the delegates were in favor of temperance and some of the delegates were in favor of making their own liquor out of their own fruit and either selling or using their own product. To many of them it was a business proposition pure and simple.

However, the Association had passed a temperance resolution the previous fall and asked all the churches to ratify it and come willing to vote for temperance and against whiskey, with the understanding that only those churches who had passed the resolution could sit as proper members of the Association.

It so happened that the membership of the High Shoals Baptist Church, where the Association was meeting, was in favor of whiskey instead of temperance. At the noon hour someone slipped in and locked the door. This locked out the Association. Delegates were told that all business

sessions would have to be held out in the grove, but that preaching could be held in the church.

John Suttle's grandfather, Elder Joseph Suttle, was at that time pastor at Double Springs Church. He was recognized as one of the members of the body but not officially from Double Springs since this church had that year voted to support liquor instead of temperance.

The following year, 1852, the vote was taken again at Double Springs and passed by one vote. It happened that Pastor Suttle and the clerk of the church scuffled over the ballots and in the scuffle turned over the table during conference. Feelings were so intense during that day and time about the liquor question that Elder Suttle had two brothers and two brothers-in-law who were excluded from the church on account of the liquor question.

During that year at Zion the Elder Suttle had been invited by the pastor, the Reverend Robin Poston, to come and talk to the people at Zion about prohibition. However, when he arrived, several of his friends told him that the membership of the church would not allow him to speak on that subject and a Mrs. Wellman offered to let him speak in a grove near her home. The announcement was made that he would speak in the grove immediately after the church service. He did not speak at church but did speak in the grove, and very soon Zion, too, had adopted a temperance resolution.

John Suttle remembers that a great many preachers, and many more laymen, and good honest citizens believed very strongly that to have a law prohibiting the making and use of alcohol was to take their liberty away. They believed that this country was founded for the sake of liberty and for the law to deprive them of any sort of liberty was to return to anarchy.

Some believed that a person had to take a little whiskey in order to be temperate. They failed to look up the definition which Webster's dictionary gives suggesting that

temperance is the moderate use of anything not harmful and the total abstinence of anything harmful.

The Kings Mountain Association remained divided for about seven years on the liquor question and finally was reunited at Zoar. The offshoot of the division was known as the "Continental Kings Mountain Association".

During the early days at New Bethel, Lawndale and Double Shoals, Mr. Suttle recalls that none of those churches would allow members to drink liquor, or to sell liquor, or have anything at all to do with the liquor traffic. If they did so, they were called on the carpet and asked to explain their action, and if they had no honest, forthright explanation and did not ask forgiveness and make a promise not to do it any more they were dismissed from the fellowship. He recalls that one man was called by the church clerk, Mr. Carme Elam, to appear at a church meeting on a certain Saturday.

The man appeared as directed and asked forgiveness and that a prayer be offered in his behalf. The church went ahead and did as he requested. The next day members were greatly surprised to note that he had been arrested with a small load of whiskey which he had gotten from the mountains. He had stopped at the church for the meeting and then went on to the mountains to get the whiskey.

In the old days there were at least two saloons in Shelby; one located where Cohen's Department store now stands, and the other on the corner occupied by the First National Bank. There was a third saloon not very far from Shelby on what is now Highway 74, West, but then was the Shelby-Rutherford road. It sat just about where the road turns north to the Dover Mill. This was operated by a Mr. Price Hamrick who also farmed some of the nearby land.

The state voted itself dry while Brother Suttle was pastor at Marshall. During the campaign he invited O. Max Gardner, Sr., to speak three times for him in May, just prior to the primary and the vote on the liquor question.

Mr. Gardner accepted, and drove up from Shelby. He spoke very forcefully in Marshall and out in the country. Although the county had been very wet, the election was carried by a considerable margin.

Johnston County, during Mr. Suttle's pastorate, was known as the banner liquor county and the banner Democrat county of North Carolina. During his stay he helped mightily in changing both these features. He was one of the leading figures in the campaign to vote out saloons in Smithfield.

It was not done all at once, but was effected in a measure by voting out the saloons and voting in a dispensary, a sort of precursor to the present ABC stores, in which there was a considerable restriction on the sale of liquor, especially to drunkards, to young people, or to drinking on the premises.

"Johnston County was normally Democratic, very strongly so, but due to my campaign one year it went Republican. The main reason for that was that a great number of the people were Hardshell Baptists and they wanted to keep their liquor. The Democrats were pledged to a dry campaign so the Hardshells turned Republican," explains John.

Johnston County had what was known as the "watch law" in which no district in the county and no town under 5,000 persons could have a saloon or a dispensary. There was no town in the county over 5,000 at that time. Mr. Suttle spent a great deal of time that year in lobbying at the state capital. He became close friends with the late R. N. Sims, a lawyer of Raleigh, and asked Mr. Sims to draft a bill which later became known as the Suttle Law.

In some manner Mr. Sims worded the law so strictly that a man could not even make cider from his own apples and remain within the law. Mr. Suttle was chairman of the Anti-Saloon League of Johnston County and Smithfield and spent all the time that he was not in the pulpit

preaching and teaching and exhorting people to change to prohibition and drive out whiskey legally.

He tells the story of Tom Barron who was chief of police in Smithfield at that time. Mr. Barron was a sober man but he was in favor of liquor and in favor of a state controlled dispensary. The wets and the drys had a sort of an agreement that if the drys won, all the new officers would be drys. If the wets won, all the new officers would be wets. The drys won, but not until several of the wets had made a threat thus, "This D—— little preacher will not last in Smithfield six months." Mr. Suttle sent word to the liquor forces that he was going to remain in Johnston County and Smithfield "until all the legal liquor in the entire county is dried up".

For a year or two Mr. Barron avoided Mr. Suttle, would not speak to him in the post office or on the street and would not come to church. However, finally in one of the stores Mr. Suttle was able to back him up into a corner and hold him long enough to tell him that he was sorry that they could not be friends, that he hoped he would think very seriously about adding his talent to that of the other citizens of the community in making Smithfield a better place, and invited him to the revival services that evening.

Strangely enough he came. He came all the way up on the pulpit and picked up Mr. Suttle who weighed less than 100 pounds, then hugged him saying, "Brother John, you're right. You've always been right." He went on to be baptized the very next night and made one of the best members of the church.

On another occasion the huge business man and farmer bodily picked up Brother Suttle. This occasion was upon the death of his little daughter, Marie, whom he loved very much.

Mr. Suttle has faced liquor problems while in the Cleveland County ministry, but the county has been dry since he came back to serve churches here. Mainly liquor problems have been among personal members.

Brother John received one bottle of liquor in his life, this being a gift from a Marshall business man upon the occasion of his 15th wedding anniversary. He had gone into the business man's store to buy a window shade and asked the merchant whether or not he was a Christian. He replied, "No." He also asked him if he had ever been a Christian or been a member of the church and he replied, "No." Later the man sent Mr. Suttle a bottle of whiskey which he claimed was fifteen years old and asked him to see if he could keep it that long. Mr. Suttle did keep it; not only fifteen years but twenty or more years and still has a little of the whiskey in the original bottle. Most of the contents have evaporated.

Mr. Suttle reports that one of the best drunk men or drunkards he has ever known was a man named Eli Olive of Johnston County. He and Mrs. Suttle first became acquainted with him one night when they heard a great moaning and groaning down at the cemetery which was just a few hundred feet from where they lived. They learned the next morning that the man doing the moaning and groaning was Eli Olive, a big farmer who drove a fine carriage and was considered rather wealthy.

XVI

How A Chew Of Tobacco Won A Convert

"ON JORDAN'S STORMY BANKS"

*The harvest truly is plenteous,
but the laborers are few.*

Matthew 9:37

Revival meetings to a country preacher are what interest is to a banker, dividends to an investor, harvest to the farmer, and an epidemic to a physician. It is a time of gathering, a time of agonizing, a time of supreme effort, a time of rejoicing, and a time of healing.

It is also a time for fried chicken, country ham, apple pies, cakes and sweets and the finest "rations and vittles" the good woman of the house can produce for the pastor and the visiting preacher who usually "runs the meeting".

In 65 years of evangelizing, John has often been the host pastor and sometimes the visitor who ran the meeting.

At other times he preached his own revival services. Some people said he did it because he wanted to keep the money for himself. Others understood that after working with certain groups of unsaved, unrepentant persons a whole year or for many years, he coveted the joy of seeing them come to the mourner's bench or into church mem-

bership under the power of his own "revival preaching".

"I have baptized over 5,000 persons in my own churches and almost an equal number in other churches where I assisted with the meetings," John says.

Until more recent years, it has been the custom among the churches of Piedmont North Carolina to have an annual revival meeting in July or August. This week of preaching services once or twice a day was commonly known as the "big meeting". In rural churches it came to be the most important activity of the entire church year, even outranking the meeting of the Association in importance for any particular church.

Middle of the summer was chosen for several reasons, mainly because it was "laying by time" for the crops. Cotton and corn were plowed the last time just before the meeting began. Grain had been cut in June, and fall harvest did not begin until September.

Everybody came. It was almost like a week of successive holidays. Whole families, none of whom had attended church for a year, often attended every session of this particular meeting. Then after it was over, unless they were truly revived, they slipped back into the old ways.

Unconsciously perhaps, a great number of people had come to believe that the only time to join a Baptist Church was during the annual protracted meeting. Even though they got conviction and privately professed a belief in a personal Saviour, it was customary to wait for one of the various invitations given at revival.

The impact revival meetings had on communities and individuals is incalculable. An entire book could be written about the sermons, the singing, the mourner's bench and heart rending confessions which were made in those meetings. John took in stride the type of revivals his churches were accustomed to having when he became a minister, and as times changed, his revivals changed, except he always insisted that every service be truly evangelistic and that anyone present who decided to do so, could make

a profession of faith and offer himself for church membership.

As a child, John had gone with his family and relatives to large numbers of revival meetings in nearby churches, but they had never gone in for the "camp meeting" type of revivals which were held frequently in various sections of North Carolina. Two of the most famous of these old camp grounds in this section are at Rock Springs in Lincoln County and Ball's Creek in Catawba County. Perhaps the most famous and biggest from point of numbers was the Cane Ridge Camp Ground in Kentucky where as many as 15,000 to 20,000 people would gather for as much as two weeks revival.

Revival meeting in the early days was a time for visiting in the home, for meeting all the members of the family and for as many as could to meet the preacher and to know him personally.

It was a time of story telling and exchange of ideas. Many sinners were won in private conversations who could not be persuaded even by powerful preaching. For instance, at Roxboro John helped the Reverend Frank Putnam in a meeting. There was a man of another denomination who lived in the neighborhood and attended Brother Putnam's church at times. A former pastor of this man was preaching "too much about the vile use of tobacco". This man indulged very freely in the use of the weed, and got tired hearing so much about it. He just decided to stay at home and enjoy chewing and smoking.

During the revival his good wife invited the preachers to dine with them. They accepted the invitation with gratitude. Mr. Putnam warned John, "Don't say anything against tobacco." The host was sitting on the front porch with his feet on the banisters when they arrived. They said he could expectorate farther than anyone around. Just as they entered the gate he "hit the bull's eye", wiped his mouth, got up and welcomed the pair of parsons.

John greeted him with, "Why brother, would you use

such a filthy thing as tobacco?" His eyes glistened as he replied, "Yes, I do and it's nobody's darned business."

John said, "Will you give me a piece?" He was amazed and asked, "Do you mean it?" "Why yes," was the reply. He pulled a plug from his pocket and insisted that John take it all. He was so pleased that he and his wife both came to church that night and joined.

"Brother Suttle, will you have a piece of chicken?" the housewife at Double Shoals asked the minister who was at her house for dinner. He had been to this particular home on many occasions and today his guest was the Reverend Leland Royster who was helping him in the annual meeting. John's favorite piece of chicken was the neck.

"I always ate the neck because I got less chicken that way," wryly smiled Brother John, "but on this particular day I got more than I bargained for. I started to get the neck as usual and as I pulled the piece toward my plate, lo and behold there was a neck nearly seven inches long which had been carefully camouflaged by the other pieces of chicken. My hostess was a woman who had a good sense of humor and had always heard that I ate only the neck of fried chicken.

"She had artfully cut the neck as long as possible, and in addition, had trimmed off the rest of the anatomy of that chicken down the backbone, all the way to the part of the chicken that goes over the fence last. It was, verily, the longest chicken neck I ever ate. All the members of the family and the guests had a good laugh."

On one occasion Brother John was having a meal with the Reverend J. L. Jenkins. They were in one of the member's homes and among the guests was a soldier boy from New Jersey or one of the New England states.

The hostess served hot biscuits, quite typical of southern meals. This Yankee boy had never eaten hot biscuits and was timid and didn't exactly understand what kind of bread it was. He wrote his mother, "I visited in a very nice home tonight, and we had a new kind of bread which

was very, very good. I think the lady called it, 'Hav'a hot'un'."

Not all prospective members have good sense or a good attitude. Some are exasperating.

Brother R. E. Treadway was conducting a meeting at New Prospect. He recognized a mourner in the audience who had been up for prayer the day before. It was a hot day and he was fanning vigorously.

Brother Treadway: "How do you feel?"

Sinner: "Hot, about the hottest day we've had. I was just standing here watching them pull fodder. How would you like to pull fodder?"

Brother Treadway: "You did not understand me. How do you feel spiritually? Have you made peace with the Lord?"

Sinner: "I don't know that me and the Lord has had any particular falling out."

Brother Treadway: "You still don't understand me. Don't you want to be born again?"

Sinner: "Been born once, don't want to be born again. Afraid they might make a gal out of me."

Sometimes when the family goes along with the visiting minister, it makes a difference. When Bertie Lee and C. B. were but infants, the Reverend Mr. Suttle was assisting another minister in a meeting. Of course, Mrs. Suttle remained home with her children. The family with whom Mr. Suttle was staying, however, insisted so frequently that Mrs. Suttle bring the children over for a night, she agreed to do so.

The home where they stayed was a nice large one, and soon Mrs. Suttle found herself with her babies in a spacious room with two feather beds. "John can take one child and sleep in one of the beds," she planned, "and I'll take the other child and sleep in the other bed."

Before she had completed the thought the host remarked, "Well, Brother Suttle, you and your wife and children

can occupy this bed, and Brother Blank can occupy the one in the corner."

Mrs. Suttle, faced with the prospects of four in one bed and a strange preacher in the same room, let her head down on her arms at the table and burst into tears. Quietly Brother Suttle called his host aside. "Brother Jones," he confided, "my wife thinks it is bad enough to sleep in the same room with one man, let alone two."

Other arrangements were quickly made since the house had many beds. The host explained that the one room he proffered was simply their customary method of sleeping guests.

The largest meeting Brother Suttle ever held was in the year 1907 while he was pastor at Marshall. He assisted in a revival at Mars Hill College and there baptized 98 persons in what is known as the Cascades, in the creek near Mars Hill. It was a meeting of ten days duration and he said one of the most enthusiastic revivals he ever attended.

He roomed at the home of Mr. Robert Gibbs who was a brother to the late Dr. E. W. Gibbs of Shelby. Mr. Gibbs was a Methodist but, with his daughter and other members of the family, joined the Baptist Church. The father and daughter joined the same evening.

Another one of the largest meetings Brother Suttle ever presided over was at the Princeton Baptist Church about the year 1900. When the meeting began there were seven members, one male and six female. At this meeting 89 persons were baptized after a ten day series of services. All of these were grown people except three children.

They were baptized in Holts Lake, and a very large crowd from Johnston County was present. The candidates all sang "Shall We Gather At The River" and then walked into the lake. They formed a single line and Brother Suttle walked down the line baptizing the entire 89. "I was tired but happy," he said.

After he had completed the baptismal services the candidates then marched out of the lake singing "Marching

To Zion". He had many meetings in which 30, 40, or 50 persons were converted and baptized, and he has had only one meeting where there were no conversions and no baptisms.

He seems to like Hickory for meetings outside Cleveland County, having held five meetings there, four at Highland Church and one at Brown Memorial. He has also held meetings in Concord, Salisbury, Stanly County and very often in his old county of Johnston.

Baptizing in a rural situation is not without its dangers.

There were quite a few to baptize at Sandy Run Church. They did not have a baptistry, so some of the members went out to a pond that was not used much to clear out a path to the water. As it was the minister's custom, he went early to see that everything was in perfect order.

He inquired of one fellow who was wielding the hoe quite vigorously what he was doing. "Killing snakes," was the reply, and John was shown a big pile of dead snakes—big, ugly, poisonous water moccasins.

"Get them out of sight quick," was the preacher's urgent response.

John recalls that a story was once told on Dr. George Purefoy who also had an experience with snakes. Dr. Purefoy was baptizing a number of candidates when all of a sudden a harelipped fellow began to pull back. "Oh, come, brother," remarked the preacher. "Don't be frightened."

"I'm not," said the boy. "Don't you thee that sthanke?" The preacher, a little deaf, could not quite understand. "Come on, brother, come on," coaxed the preacher.

"I thay," says the boy. "Don't you see that damn sthanke?" After the excitement was over he repented, asked to be forgiven, and was baptized.

For the most part, feelings and emotional outbursts are kept under fair control, but half a century ago nearly every church had one or two shouters. Mrs. "Jones" and Mrs. "Brown" were inveterate "shouters" at Pleasant Grove Church. When one would shout the other always joined

in. On this particular occasion they sat opposite each other with split bonnets on. They decided to get up at the same time, hit their bonnets together with such force that they knocked each other back. Mrs. "Jones" arose, pushing back her bonnet, and asked, "What in the devil you trying to do? Bust somebody's brains out?"

At the same church during a revival, Brother D. G. Washburn asked everyone to go out alone at sunset and pray for the meeting, come back next day and give their experience. Old Brother Lawson Wright, a licentiate preacher, gave his experience thus: "Brother Washburn, I went out behind the barn in the fence corner and prayed. I got so happy I looked around for someone to shake hands with. There was no one in sight except my old milk cow. I just grabbed her tail and shook it." He concluded by saying, "Brethren, when you get happy, it's good to shake tails with a cow."

Herman Redmon, a boy of twelve who lived on the banks of the French Broad and went in swimming just any time, was not ready to be immersed with the rest of the candidates because he did not get his clothes on in time.

Mrs. Falls was very religious, always attended church and made a record of the text. On this particular Sunday she was ill and impressed it on her young son to remember the text so Mother could record it. When he returned, this conversation took place.

"Son, was it a good sermon?"

"Yes, Ma."

"Do you remember the text?"

"Yes, Ma."

"Where was it?"

"I don't remember where it was, but the text was 'Don't be scared. You will get your quilt!'"

The text really was, "Fear not, I will give thee the Comforter."

Mr. Suttle often tells this story when he runs into cold, indifferent people at revival meetings. He was helping the late W. R. Bradshaw in a meeting at the Halltown Baptist

Church near Marion. Attendance was poor, response to the minister's invitation was poor, no one had gone out to seek the lost, and in general, the meeting was cold—very cold. On the last night of the service Brother Bradshaw tearfully told the congregation that he was frankly very much disappointed and stated he was going to pray one last prayer.

Whereupon he did pray a very eloquent prayer in which he asked the Lord to send these people a sign; a sign that the Lord is God; a sign to jolt them out of their lethargy. Then almost before he got out of the community things began to happen.

One man murdered his neighbor; another was killed when his house fell upon him. As if that were not enough, a smallpox epidemic broke out and thirteen people in that small community died.

Brother Suttle later held a meeting at the Halltown Church and said it was one of the finest, most responsive meetings he had ever held. Bradshaw went on later to become pastor of the First Baptist Church of Hickory and then of Brown Memorial Church of Winston-Salem.

One of John's favorite illustrations in evangelistic sermons had to do with Dwight L. Moody's mistake. The famed Moody of Chicago told a story on himself that in his ministry he used to tell the people to think over his message and go home and decide.

Then came the disastrous Chicago fire of 1886 and a large number of people who had been attending services did not get to come back. From then on Mr. Moody always said, "Decide now." Mr. Suttle said he urges people to decide now. They might not come back.

John Suttle's approach to a sinner is direct and forthright. Some of his friends said that he is too direct and too abrupt. However, the following incident will illustrate something of his approach to a certain type of man.

A grown man in the eastern part of the state, a Hard-shell Baptist by background, got under conviction and

wanted to be saved but stated that he was "waiting on feeling".

After dealing with him for several days, Brother Suttle explained that he thought the time was right now for him to come and make a public profession and join the church.

"But Brother Suttle, I'm still waiting on feeling. I just don't feel that I am saved."

John told him, "Then I'll pray for something that will give you feeling. I'll pray that you may lose your health and then you can have plenty of feeling." The man said that he didn't want to lose his health.

"Very well then," said John. "I'll pray that your wife may get sick or lose her health or that your mother may die."

Still the man was not willing for any of these things to happen. Then said Brother Suttle, "It's not feeling you want man. It's faith in the Lord." The man saw the point and was saved.

Brother Suttle has been in many communities which were faced with drought and has conducted prayer meetings for rain. Always he has had great faith in prayer for rains and says it does a lot of good whether it rains or not. He says that if it doesn't rain, it doesn't mean the Lord doesn't answer prayer. It just means He said, "No!"

There is the story of the young minister who arrived in a drought-stricken community just in time to be called upon to lead the prayer for rain. He did so in a very effective manner and prayed so earnestly and so effectively that by the time the meeting was over the rain was pouring down in torrents. It rained all night, the next day and the following day, until the streams were out of their banks and the crops deluged. Church members met again and decided they would pray for the rain to stop. Someone asked if they should invite the young minister to lead the prayer.

One farmer said, "No! I believe we had better ask somebody else. This young preacher has brought so much rain it shows he doesn't know anything about agriculture."

During a severe drought which threatened to destroy all of the crops, members of one of the county churches decided to hold a prayer meeting for rain. Brother Suttle was to be assisted by another pastor in conducting the prayers. All were standing around in the church yard before the meeting began.

Brother Suttle said to his fellow preacher, "Well, Brother, don't you think we had better go in now to begin the services?"

"No, not quite yet," the other whispered. "The wind is coming from the wrong direction."

The season was bad for crops. Rain refused to come and the upland corn was parched. Only in the rich bottom lands did the leaves remain green and growing. As soon as the old farmer had become resigned to the loss of all crops except those in the bottom land, the rains came. They came in such torrents that the green corn in the bottom land was flooded and destroyed.

"You know what I think?" the perplexed man said to Brother John. "I think the Lord ain't much more for ye than he is agin' ye."

He tells one story which he said actually occurred when he came to South Shelby. He was preaching away in good form when a late comer opened the door, came in and sat down quietly. The breeze which came in from the open door caused a tall slender man to sneeze. He sneezed so violently that he spit out his false teeth. The molars rolled down the aisle at least two benches in front of him.

Brother Suttle says it is a fact that the slim man leaned forward, crawled on his hands and knees down the aisle to retrieve the teeth, popped them back into his mouth and then backed up to the place he was sitting.

Dr. C. C. Haymore of Mt. Airy, North Carolina, helped John in several meetings. Later he was honored by having Haymore Memorial Church in Mt. Airy named for him. Sometime during a revival meeting, he usually quoted the following poem of which he was the author:

Saint Peter settin at de gate,
Nigger passin' by.
Saint Peter up and says to him
How did you come to die?

"Go ax de man what held de gun
A pintin at de roos,
Go ax de dog what held my foot,
And would not let hit loose."

And so Saint Peter says to him,
"You was koch in de act,"
Dat nigger turnt and looked at him
And spons "hit is a fact."

Down in de pit den you must go
For stealin of dat hen,
Dat nigger scrach his head right hard,
Saint Peter had him den.

But directly liffin up his arms,
He flop em on his side,
An zactly like a rooster crows,
Three times out loud he cried.

Saint Peter hung his head in shame,
He 'membered of his sin;
And grabbing up a great big key,
He let dat nigger in.

Although John Suttle got as much fun as anybody out of being with people, telling his own stories and listening to theirs, when he got into the pulpit he was deadly serious about winning the lost to Christ.

Fred Cartee, one of the promising young ministers of this section, recalls his first experience in being in a Suttle meeting. John was helping one of his preacher boys, the

Reverend W. F. McGinnis, pastor of High Shoals in Rutherford County, in a meeting.

Fred said, "I sensed something in his efforts that I had never felt before. He seemed to preach every day as though that would be the last sermon he would ever preach, and no one knew but what it might be for the doctors had advised him against preaching in revivals. Besides his earnest preaching appeal to the people, he insisted that I use 'On Jordan's Stormy Banks' as the invitation hymn. If I made any other selection he would ask me to change after two or three verses to what he called 'my song'."

His appeal to the lost was something like this. "I know that I stand on the banks of Jordan and can almost see the other side. Now, who will come and go with me, I am bound for the Promised Land. I am on my way to that promised land. Are you? Why not accept Christ as your Saviour tonight and get upon that road that leads to the Promised Land.

"No doubt I will be over in Glory ahead of most of you, but I will be waiting for you on Canaan's happy shore. If any of you don't come, I'm going to be disappointed because He made a Way and I offer you that Way tonight.

"Don't disappoint us and don't disappoint God, but accept God's Son who is the Way, the Truth and the Life."

Fred, along with many other young ministers, has paraphrased the words of the young Prophet Elisha. "My fondest wish is that the mantle of Brother Suttle would fall upon me and that I be given a double portion of his spirit."

XVII

Why The Little Horse Did Not Drown

"HE LEADETH ME."

I opened my doors to the traveller.

Job 31:32

"Parson, do you need any help?" said a stranger at the water's edge of Main Broad River one day in 1907.

"No, why?" asked John.

"Well, it looks like that little horse of yours is going to drown himself." He had noticed that the pony-sized animal John was driving had plunged his nose into the water up to his eyes to drink of the cooling flow of the mountain stream.

"He does that because he is a 'banker'," John explained to the stranger. "He is not a real banker like you are thinking about. He is of a breed that is native to the 'outer banks' of the coastal section of Eastern North Carolina. Down east they have to stick their heads deep into that brackish water to get a fresh drink."

John had taken Billy, the little "banker pony", with him to Marshall when he moved his family there in the fall of 1907. Billy was a Shetland type pony, mixed with a little

horse and was about as tough as the proverbial Rocky Mountain burro. He was wiry of build, with long coarse hair, slender legs, and small feet.

"He was especially smart and apt when it came to traveling the rough mountain roads in those days. And the roads were really rough, rocky, and dangerous from slides in the winter," said John.

Billy not only drank his fill from Broad River that day, but pulled the buggy on across and to Shelby. He made the trip from Shelby to Marshall several times, a distance of over 100 miles. It took him about a week to make the trip to the mountains when he traveled 350 miles from Smithfield to Marshall.

Mrs. Suttle recalled the first day they arrived in Madison that a man on the street who was slightly intoxicated blurted out, "My God men, look at that little pony, that little buggy and that little man." Even though Billy was small, he was a good family horse, a good fox horse and performed perfectly in all kinds of weather. "Just the horse I needed then," says John.

For more than a quarter of a century John did his traveling by the customary methods of that day. He walked, rode a horse or drove a buggy, carriage or wagon. Most of the time it was a buggy. Not too long ago he took his first ride in an airplane and expressed the opinion that if he were going to preach fifty more years, he would do a lot of traveling by air.

"My first horse was an old buckskin-colored horse. I brightened him up a bit by letting him pull a yellow buggy with yellow harness. I paid \$125.00 for the horse and an equal amount for the rig," he said.

John had one of the old-fashioned lap robes which was colored red on one side and black on the other; also, a rather fancy buggy whip. In the wintertime he would heat a rock and put it in the foot of the buggy, cover it up with the lap robe and keep fairly warm. After a few years, when he felt he could afford it, he bought a little

charcoal stove. He would light up the charcoal before he left home, put it down in front of the dashboard of the buggy, fold the lap robe over it and there was enough warmth not only for his feet, but for the rest of his body as well.

He recalls that one winter when he was living at Cleveland Mills in Lawndale he drove all the way to Bethlehem for one of the Saturday afternoon meetings. When he got there he found out that there was no fire in the church. In fact, there being snow on the ground, nobody planned to attend. He stood around a little while wondering what to do when a gentleman came up and asked him to go to dinner. He reported that his wife had seen him pass and said, "I believe that's the new preacher. You better go down and invite him to come to dinner." It turned out that his host was J. T. McDaniel who was the father of Mrs. W. G. Camp, wife of the present pastor of Sandy Run.

Since he had to travel a great deal and had to drive his animals fairly hard, Brother Suttle traded often. However, he said he did not trade as often as one old preacher, the Reverend B. M. Bridges, who was pastor of a good many churches in the western part of the Association and who lived near the present Pleasant Ridge Community.

The story is told that Mr. Bridges and the Reverend A. C. Irvin traded horses once upon a time in a trade not too satisfactory to Brother Irvin. It was said that Mr. Irvin had a horse which stumbled occasionally and he was afraid of a stumbling horse because from time to time he had his wife and several children in the buggy with him. He was afraid someone might get hurt. So he asked Mr. Bridges, who had the reputation of being quite a horse trader, if he would look out and see if he could find someone who would trade with him.

"I'll be glad to let you have my horse for yours," said Brother Bridges. Whereupon Mr. Irvin said, "It's a trade." At the next Associational meeting, however, he and Mr.

Bridges were hardly on speaking terms because he said the Bridges horse stumbled even worse than his own.

For longer trips John always took the train. In this manner he went to approximately 60 of the 65 meetings of the Southern Baptist Convention held during his active ministry, a record perhaps not equalled in the entire convention.

"I have also been fortunate enough to attend all but four of the meetings of our Baptist State Convention in that time," he says. He has been present at all the commencement exercises of Gardner-Webb College the past 50 years, a record equalled only by Mrs. J. D. Huggins, widow of the school's first principal.

Before the advent of good roads and the invention of automobiles and buses, for a minister to be able to travel as extensively as John and make all appointments in spite of weather and distance, is an accomplishment little short of a miracle.

The long hours spent in the saddle or in the buggy were John's study time. It was then he thought out the problems of his churches and of his members. As the horse jogged along the familiar roads, the young minister had plenty of time to outline his next sermon or half a dozen sermons, memorize them and repeat the important points over and over.

"The young minister of this day and time never has so much free time as I had. Lack of time and distractions such as telephones, radios, television, and usual city noises can keep a person from concentrating like he ought to," he says. "No wonder so many of the new preachers have to quote part of their sermons out of books. They never have time to think out the thoughts for themselves," he added.

In early 1918, John was driving a big bay horse named Fred. Fred was a good horse and could run like an Arabian charger, but even at that, to get around to all of the six churches and John's many meetings was too much for him.

Fred, buggy, harness and all went to the block. He was traded for a car, a spanking new Maxwell, which John promptly dubbed, "The Gospel Car".

He proceeded to put 100,000 miles on the speedometer before he traded it in for another Maxwell, which he named, "Gospel Car No. II".

A sidelight about this car concerns A. V. Washburn, Jr., who at present is Secretary of the Sunday School Department of the Sunday School Board in Nashville, Tennessee. A. V., then quite a small boy, one day rushed into the kitchen to find his mother.

"Pastor Suttle tells lies," he said to his mother. "Why A. V., how can you say such a thing? You know Brother Suttle is a good man and truthful. What makes you think so?" asked his worried mother.

"Well, he told us Sunday he had a Gospel Car. It ain't so. It's an old Maxwell just like ours," he told her.

Incidentally, Pastor Suttle was the second person in Cleveland County to drive all the way from Shelby, North Carolina, to Atlanta, Georgia, in an automobile the same day. Charles L. Eskridge, former auto dealer, was the first. In a day when top speed for a car was 25 miles per hour and roads were unpaved, often muddy and rocky all the way, that was indeed an accomplishment. The distance then was approximately 300 miles.

The next car was a Ford coupé which he also drove more than 100,000 miles. The next three were Oldsmobiles which also took on their hundreds of thousands of miles.

The last and final car which Pastor Suttle has driven and still is driving is a 1950 Buick which he received as a present on the occasion of his 80th birthday. This car he enjoys driving as well or better than any of the others but he adds rather ruefully, "It does drink up the gas."

In all of his hundreds of thousands of miles of driving he has not had a major accident, and no one has ever been hurt in the small accidents in which he has been involved. Furthermore, he has not been late to a preaching appoint-

ment on account of car failure; or late at all, for that matter!

He tells the story that on one occasion he thought he would be late. He was driving from Sandy Run in Mooresboro to Double Springs for a preaching appointment, accompanied by Bob Moore of Mooresboro. A wheel of his old Maxwell came off and rolled out into the cotton patch.

Mr. Moore told him, "Parson, this is one time you are going to be late for sure." But it happened he was not late. About that time Dr. L. V. Lee of Lattimore came by on his way to make a call and recognized Pastor Suttle, stopped and asked if he could help, and volunteered to take him to Double Springs.

Dr. Lee got him there about one minute ahead of time. Mr. Moore stayed to fix the wheel and brought it on to Double Springs by the time the service was over.

About the only brush Brother John ever had with the law was when vandals stole and burned one of his Oldsmobiles in 1938. The Shelby Daily Star reported the incident:

"Vandalism of a brand seldom heard of in this area, last night destroyed the Oldsmobile sedan of the Reverend J. W. Suttle, as the thieves who stole it from in front of his home Tuesday burned it to the ground on the highway between Anderson and Greenville, South Carolina.

"Sheriff Raymond Cline said he was in touch with South Carolina officers who reported that the car was found burned and smoking, a total loss.

"In addition to Reverend Mr. Suttle's car, the thieves stole another and burned it, then stole another, and in a gun battle with officers jumped out and ran. The last I heard, the officers felt capture was near," Sheriff Cline said.

Insurance and gifts from friends and churches quickly replaced his car.

When he could get a few days respite from his labor in the churches John and Mrs. Suttle would drive up to Hartford, Connecticut, to visit their two daughters and their

families. On one such occasion this trip brought them a pleasant surprise. Mrs. Suttle recalls the details.

"We were headed toward a bridge across the Potomac when a traffic officer hailed us. 'You can't go through here,' he said. 'What's the matter, is the bridge washed out?' inquired the minister. 'No, the King and Queen are to pass in a few minutes,' returned the officer."

The Shelby party headed into a nearby parking space and in less than twenty minutes the royal party passed by within twenty feet of where they were standing. The King and Queen had been to Arlington and Mount Vernon.

Soon the Shelby people were on their way after experiencing the thrill of a lifetime.

The need for improved travel made John conscious of all the factors involved in getting good roads. While not strictly a politician, he was constantly on the lookout for opportunities to help get more and better roads.

He was a friend to T. Max Watson who at one time was District Commissioner for the State Highway Department. Mr. Watson was one of his Rutherford County cousins and one of the most influential figures in this section. Watson and O. Max Gardner were close friends also, and through the mutual acquaintance of Suttle and Gardner, Mr. Watson found ways and means of paving drive-ways around Gardner-Webb College.

The question of putting down paving around the circle in front of the President's home was brought up. Mr. Gardner had told Mr. Watson that he was not going to ask him for the favor. Whereupon Mr. Watson replied, "There wasn't any way that I could do the other paving with tax money but I did; I guess they will hang me just as high to steal a lamb as they would to steal a sheep. We'll just pave both roads."

XVIII

"I'm Living To Preach That Doctor's Funeral"

"THE GREAT PHYSICIAN NOW IS NEAR."

*O Lord, my God, I cried unto thee,
and thou hast healed me.*

Psalm 30:2

"Now, I have got John Suttle right where I want him," Dr. E. B. Lattimore said to the nurses as the popular minister faded into unconsciousness under an anesthetic. "This man has put me to sleep many times with his sermons, and now we will put him to sleep with ether."

Mr. Suttle was having an operation on his ailing jaw and had to have a general anesthetic.

Dr. Lattimore, pioneer general practitioner from a prominent Cleveland County family, and who has been in the active practice of medicine nearly sixty years, has been the family physician of John Suttle since he returned to Cleveland County in 1908.

"I guess I have delivered over 5,000 babies and have made well over \$1,000,000 but, of course, I was unable to collect all that money," says the aging family doctor with a twinkle in his eye.

"Right now I am just waiting around a little longer to be able to sign John's death certificate."

"You'll do nothing of the kind," chimed in Brother John. "One of the reasons I am waiting around is just to be able to preach your funeral," he added.

So the two doughty old warriors of Medicine and Religion sparred with each other, holding very high regard one for the other, and together giving about the most interesting conversation of any two people in Cleveland County. They can regale each other or their listeners with tales of the old days and experiences they had with the same families fifty and sixty years ago.

Then, as now, Medicine and Religion often went hand in hand.

Dr. Lattimore recalls that one of the first trips he ever made with John Suttle was to New Prospect Church where he arranged for the young minister and himself to get an invitation for dinner at the home of one of his relatives.

Everett B. Lattimore is the kind of doctor a preacher like John Suttle would choose for a family doctor.

In 1954, he was selected not only as the "Doctor of the Year" for the State of North Carolina but was runner-up for the "Doctor of the Year" for the entire United States, elected by the American Medical Association for this distinct honor.

Professionally he has done everything and has been everything that a family doctor can do or be in his profession, in the societies, and organizations concerning medicine. At the same time he has held the role of head of a family, medical advisor, counselor, and confidant in a marvelous way all these years. He has practiced medicine almost as long as John has served in the ministry and for every funeral John has preached he says, "I brought a new baby to take the place of the one John put away."

His age and length of practice are reflected in the fact that only recently he delivered a baby four generations removed from the child he delivered the first year of prac-

tice in Cleveland County. That child was the great-great-granddaughter of Mr. and Mrs. William Hoyle, pioneer residents of Cleveland County. He previously had delivered their daughter, granddaughter, and great-grandson.

Dr. Lattimore has been characterized as the "Dean of Physicians" not only of Cleveland County but of the State of North Carolina. All doctors who know him say he is an ideal "family" physician with the old ethics and the modern touch. He knows and loves people and remembers nearly everybody he ever knew or treated. He remembers what was wrong with them physically. More than that, he remembers their problems and worries, their special family traits and troubles. He is a born optimist and has endless stories, anecdotes, and illustrations to tell, spiced with a good sense of humor, for what in the present day might be called psychotherapy. He calls it common sense.

An unusual coincidence about Suttle and doctors occurred in November, 1948, when Brother John had just been elected President of the North Carolina State Baptist Convention which was the same week Princess Elizabeth's baby was expected to be born in England.

By some strange quirk of fate, the Associated Press switched the pictures of the little preacher and the internationally known gynecologist, Sir William Gilliat. The caption under the picture of Mr. Suttle read, "The above man flew to England recently and is expected to deliver the Princess' baby in a few days." The caption under the picture of Sir Gilliat read that he was soon to preside at the annual session of the North Carolina State Baptist Convention in Charlotte.

Needless to say, Brother Suttle took a great deal of ribbing by his friends, but he hastened to explain that his gynecological abilities had been used only for assisting their household dog to have her puppies.

In the 70's and 80's when John was growing up, there were few doctors, virtually no hospitals and the under-

standing and treatment of disease had improved very little since the dark ages. Home remedies were the rule.

Children were subject to "joint rheumatism", "the bloody flux", milk poisoning, and "scrofula" which was pronounced, "scrofulow". The usual diseases were measles, mumps, whooping cough, chicken pox, and in addition, everyone was subject to typhoid fever, diphtheria, lock-jaw, and smallpox.

Older persons were subject to "consumption" as tuberculosis and lung cancer were called. If the disease was acute and severe, it was "galloping consumption". Pneumonia was "pneumony fever", and pleurisy was "side pleurisy". Appendicitis was unknown and usually undiagnosed but was thought to be a kind of "colic". Fall sores were "dew poisoning". Sinus trouble was "catarrh". Urticaria was the "bold hives". Almost any pain in the back was "the lumbago".

John's mother, as well as her neighbors, had the usual stock of herbs and crude drugs. Yellow root, lion's tongue, liverwort, pennyroyal, for hot teas; onions and mustard for poultices, along with the inevitable castor oil, were among the many remedies.

If the doctor was called, the patient almost invariably received calomel, a form of mercuric chloride. The dose was all that would stay on the end of the blade of the doctor's pocket knife. If the patient were a child, he used the little blade. Other remedies included all grades of alcoholic spirits from pure corn whiskey to peach and apple brandy, grape and blackberry wine or even locust and persimmon beer. Young babies were sometimes treated for dietary and vitamin deficiencies by giving them "pot likker". This was the juices left in the pot after a "mess" of vegetables or greens had been cooked.

Many of the treatments had absolutely no reason at all to them but were based entirely upon superstition. One belief was that if a new born baby had its left foot dipped into new fallen snow, the child never would suffer the toothache.

In his boyhood, great medical wisdom was still attributed to the Indians. A vast number of the patent medicines found on the shelves in grocery stores and drug stores claimed that their products were of Indian origin. As a boy, he used to see with great interest and no little awe the traveling medicine man come to Shelby and other parts of the county to sell the "wonderful, wonderful, wonderful medicine". The driver of this one-man show either claimed to be an Indian or that he got all of his secrets directly from the Indians, and that it was the very thing to cure whatever was wrong with you.

Most of such drugs were certainly fake so far as having medicinal properties, but they were not fakes in their effects. Some had mild laxative qualities. Others were bitters or stomachics and a few may have been mild stimulants. This was the generation when people believed that the worse a medicine smelled and tasted, the better the medicine. If it had a little alcohol so much the better, and some patients demanded more alcohol and less medicine.

Every almanac that came out not only contained all the old remedies with "receipts" for making family medicines out of roots, barks, leaves, and berries, but had a few new ones each year which the housewife would try when another member of her family became ill. The drugs she did not have she would buy from itinerant peddlers who came around. Whatever the illness, there was always some use for lavender, oak of Jerusalem, thyme, feverfew, and boneset.

Some of the commonest bitters were obtained from the yellow poplar, sumac, burdock, tansy, poke berry, jimson weed, rhubarb, dogwood and the inevitable red pepper. Bitters were routine for the treatment of dyspepsia.

In the spring sassafras tea was brewed to "thin the blood" which as everybody knew had grown thick during the winter. Along with the tea nearly everyone got generous doses of sulfur and molasses. For days and days everybody in the family was a little mill making hydrogen sulfide, which every high school chemistry student now-

adays recognizes as a harmless but very foul smelling gas.

The bark of wild cherry, especially the wild black cherry and the slippery elm, was good for everything; either to drink as tea or to grind up and make a poultice for all sorts of wounds, swellings, sprains, and boils. Goose grease, sheep fat or lanolin rivaled the Indian's use of bear grease as an ointment.

Rosin (especially fresh), distilled turpentine, and even kerosene were used for such things as sore throat, lumbago, and other forms of rheumatism.

A tiny vial of hard-to-get distilled turpentine of balsam was highly prized as a treatment for "the gravel" and other forms of kidney trouble. It was peddled by the itinerants a few drops at a time wherever people would buy or barter for this product.

May apple, commonly called "maypops", rhubarb, and aloes were favorite laxatives. Nearly every family had a little ipecac which could make a patient vomit.

White people did not use them much of the time, but little John's colored playmates very often had a necklace of foul smelling asafoetida, or an amulet of a simple copper wire, a pierced dime, or even a silk sewing thread. The mothers believed that these items had the power to keep off disease, to protect the child from hexes, spells by witches, and to keep them normal.

Even to this day a few of these pagan practices exist among the rural colored people of this section.

Out in the small Negro house behind the Suttles' Blackburg home lived an old woman who was very sick. Mrs. Suttle asked one of the old woman's friends what was the matter with her and got the following reply: "Why, she's conjured! A lizza'd is undah de skin, an' hit keeps runnin' back and fo'th!"

On one occasion John came near getting pneumonia in Johnston County when he was delayed by a severe sleet and ice storm. At that time he had plenty of hair, a full grown beard and long mustache. The wind blew his hat off and he did not have a lap robe, so when he arrived home

his hair, mustache, and beard were a solid mass of sleet and ice.

In Johnston County it was almost impossible to get a doctor and many times when people were desperately ill they would send for the minister instead of the doctor. Brother Suttle never had studied medicine, and on one occasion when one of his member's babies had a severe case of croup with cold in the chest and throat, he did not know what to do.

"I wouldn't have known what to do if it had been my own baby," but fortunately the family had an old doctor's book and Brother Suttle looked through it hurriedly and found that of the score or more treatments for croup one included placing ice water on the chest and throat. It was a cold winter night so he dipped a towel in a bucket of ice water and slapped it on the baby's neck and chest and after the initial shock and outcry, the baby soon began to breathe easier and in a few minutes was fast asleep.

On one occasion in Johnston County when the family could not get a doctor, he had to stand by and watch a mother and baby die in childbirth and later assisted in burying them.

Brother John says he always got everything that came around and was usually the first to get it except in the case of measles. He was in and out of measles many times as a boy and even slept with Brother Joe when he had the measles. After he was grown he merely passed a house where a case of measles had been quarantined, then came down with the disease.

At Albemarle he became the sickest he ever has been. He thought he was going to die. He had what old people at that time called "cholera morbus" which is a severe, incapacitating diarrhea, probably what doctors now call food poisoning. He was treated by one of the good women in the community who used her favorite remedies of black pepper and vinegar in large quantities. While convalescing he was forced to eat soup and meat made from a peafowl.

He said this one was so old that even the gravy was tough.

Mr. Suttle once was bitten by a snake but until this day doesn't know the variety or whether it was poison. He was washing his hands in a small creek when suddenly the snake reached up and grabbed his finger. He flung it off quickly and just about as quickly applied a good application of tobacco juice. The finger did not even swell.

Brother John had to take great quantities of quinine to keep off malaria, and many times had a malaria chill while preaching or making his ministerial rounds. Quinine was taken either as a syrup or a capsule. As a syrup it was about the bitterest thing anyone ever tried, and the capsule was so big and bulky it was hard to swallow.

John has always had a good relationship with doctors and has delighted to do as near as possible what the doctor advised. However, he was vaccinated four times for smallpox before it took. He recalls that several years ago he was preaching at Waco when a patient broke out with smallpox during the church service. He rushed right home and had Dr. Lattimore vaccinate him again since one of his great fears was that in all his public contacts he might bring home some strange disease to his wife and children.

He recalls the pest houses which were in existence sixty years ago for the control of contagious diseases. People with smallpox or plague or other highly contagious diseases were confined to pest houses. In Shelby this was an old abandoned building back of the cemetery, and only a few of the bravest would venture to take the inmates some hot soup, fresh bread or a piece of meat.

When he first came to Cleveland County after his tour of duty in the Mission Field, most of his patients either got well at home or died at home. There was no hospital closer than Rutherfordton although a few prominent Shelby people went on the train to Baltimore for acute appendicitis.

Some of the doctors in Shelby included Dr. O. P. Gardner, who drove a two-wheel sulky and had an under-the-chin beard; Dr. W. P. Andrews, who was tall and stately;

Dr. R. H. Morrison, who had a long black beard; Dr. L. N. Durham, a dentist, and Dr. Bob Ware, a dentist. He recalls that at the age of thirteen, a dentist in Ridgeway, South Carolina, pulled a tooth for him by sheer force without benefit of anesthetic.

Until after he retired from active work in the ministry, John spent very little time with doctors or in hospitals except to visit. However, he was bothered for many years with what the doctors called "trigeminal neuralgia" in the right side of his face.

No one knows what causes the trouble but it is characterized by severe lightning-like pains over the side of the face, so severe that one cannot even call out in pain. It is almost paralyzing in nature. Dr. J. W. Harbison of Shelby injected the ailing nerve on several occasions and Brother Suttle got temporary relief. Dr. Harbinson removed a portion of the nerve after which he was relieved for several years. In 1942, it grew back and the pains were so severe he went down to Duke University Hospital and had the nationally famous neuro-surgeon, Dr. Barnes Woodhall, perform a more serious operation.

Dr. Woodhall is even shorter and smaller in stature than Brother John. They teased each other a great deal about their size. Dr. Woodhall had to stand on a platform of wooden blocks to be able to reach the operating table.

During the course of surgery he went through the skull to the outer edge of the brain and clipped the roots of the ailing nerve. "I can give you almost 100% assurance that you will never have another pain from that nerve in this lifetime," said Dr. Woodhall. From 1942 to 1955 his prediction held. Not only that, but Brother Suttle's face on the right side was completely numb. "I cannot even feel when I shave on that side, nor can I tell when the wash cloth is hot or cold. I can't even taste food in the right side of my mouth."

In the spring of 1955 while in the Shelby Hospital for a checkup, an amazing thing happened. Brother John said one morning while eating, he accidentally shifted a

little food to the right side of his mouth and could taste it. Moreover, he said he could feel it. He examined himself a little closer and was certain he could feel little prickling sensations in the right side of his face where there had been no feeling for thirteen years. "I may have to write Dr. Woodhall and tell him he has an exception to his rule." However, thus far, he has had none of the lacerating pain which used to occur.

In his later years Mr. Suttle has had several light heart attacks or sinking spells. One of the most severe was an attack of angina on April 3, 1954, being a Saturday before a commemoration and anniversary celebration at Double Springs the following Sunday. He was in the bathroom shaving when a severe pain struck him in the chest, went up into his neck and out his left arm.

It hit him so hard he said it felt like someone had stuck a needle through his chest and for a moment he could hardly stand on his feet. He had to lean against the wall. He began to fear that his doctor would not allow him to go to Double Springs the next day so he decided not to tell anybody. But to be sure that he was all right he did get out of the house by sheer will power and drive up town to see Dr. H. C. Thompson.

Dr. Thompson and Suttle's son-in-law, Dr. Joe Cabiness, finally agreed to let him go to Double Springs for the commemoration service on the condition that he would not speak too long and not try to preside. They felt that the worry and anxiety of staying at home, missing such an important service, would be harder on his heart and nervous system than to go and take part.

In 1954, he had a mild heart attack and a period of depression which came from low blood pressure. During this time in the hospital, he very carefully made out the program for his funeral services, even down to the ministers who were to speak, the songs to be sung, and the pallbearers. However, as he improved and was able to leave the hospital, he sealed this information in an envelope to wait until "it is a little more appropriate".

In 1955, he entered the hospital again for a general checkup and a few days rest where it was discovered his hemoglobin was quite low; that is, he did not have enough redness in his red corpuscles. His blood, in fact, was pink instead of red. A few days later after receiving two or three pints of blood, he exclaimed, "I feel the best I have in months. This blood must have come from a strong, healthy woman. I not only feel good but I want to talk all the time. Not only that, I want to talk about somebody."

Mr. Suttle always enjoyed new babies both in the home and at the hospital, and said that although the following story did not happen to him, he is quite in sympathy with the minister who told it. It so happened that the young mother had just come home from the hospital with a new baby. Her other child, a four year old, was playing in the yard. The minister came by to pay his respects and to see how the mother and new baby were doing and stopped for a moment to chat with little Johnny.

"Johnny, it seems like I hear a baby crying in the house." "Yes," said Johnny. "And I guess if you didn't have any hair or teeth or couldn't walk and couldn't talk and had to get your dinner like he does, you would be crying too!"

Brother John chewed tobacco for 65 years and finally quit because he thought it irritated his mouth. He told a story of one prominent minister in the eastern part of the state who was offered a cigar by another minister equally as prominent. The first one said, "Thank you, I don't smoke. I'm a Christian." The second minister said, "I am a Christian too, but I never let it make a fool out of me."

This brings to mind the Suttle story which has been told on a minister, a professor of Campbell College, regarding his use of tobacco. It was said that he was holding a revival meeting at Buies Creek and preached several strong sermons against the use of tobacco, that he labeled

the use of tobacco as both unchristian and at least unmoral if not immoral.

The following week the Campbell College newspaper came out with pictures of tobacco and tobacco barns on farms owned by the minister, and with the blazing headlines that he was going to burn up his barns and destroy his tobacco because surely, if it was unchristian and not moral to use it, he certainly would have no part in growing it. However, college officials stopped circulation of the paper in time to save the minister too much embarrassment, and the fact is, he never did burn the barns.

Once a very timid young minister, the Reverend J. M. Kester, who later became a Shelby pastor, was helping John in a country church. They were to take supper with a certain family. During the day someone went to town to replenish the larder, and incidentally bought some Epsom Salts. It was put on the mantel. Supper was on the table but no sugar was in the bowl. One of the family, thinking the salts was sugar, filled the bowl. It was very innocently passed to the young preacher. He very generously helped himself.

"Imagine his dismay when he tasted his coffee and found he had put two full teaspoons of salts in it! He was a good sport though and drank it and did not say one word," says Mrs. Suttle. "He slept very little that night."

Mr. Suttle does not hesitate to call attention to a disease common to many of his members which he calls *Morbus Sabbaticus* or the Sunday Sickness. The idea probably was not original with him but he often told his congregation something like this:

Morbus Sabbaticus is a disease that is peculiar to church membership.

The symptoms vary, but it never interferes with the appetite.

It never lasts more than 24 hours at a time.

No physician is ever called.

It always proves fatal in the end—to the soul.

It is contagious.

The attack comes on suddenly every Sunday; no symptoms are felt on Saturday night, and the patient awakes as usual, feeling fine; eats a hearty breakfast.

About 9:00 the attack comes on and lasts until around noon.

In the afternoon the patient is much improved and is able to take a ride or read the Sunday paper.

XIX

The Mystery Of The Midnight Wedding

“WONDERFUL STORY OF LOVE.”

*What God has joined together,
let not man put asunder.*

Matthew 19:6

“Brother Suttle, we want to get married.”

This simple statement and request has been made to Brother John almost 2,000 times in the past 65 years. That many times he has replied, “All right, when?”

“Some of the most amusing, interesting, heartwarming and enriching experiences of my ministry have been with weddings and funerals,” says John. This is one of the sidelines of the ministry, especially the rural ministry, in which the pastor never knows just what to expect. Always expect some unusual things.

“No one is more human than when they get married or go to a funeral,” he says.

The first couple he married after his ordination to the ministry was in Blacksburg, South Carolina, in the early winter of 1891. He was staying at the Airline Hotel and at nineteen years of age still was unmarried himself, but was courting rather steadily.

It was bitter cold that December. About three inches of snow lay on the ground.

"We want to be married outside on the sidewalk," the couple had insisted. "And we are in a hurry," they added. They had just run away and wished to keep on running, they admitted.

The young preacher got his Bible, said the magic words and signed the necessary papers. The groom kissed the bride, handed the parson the half dollar in his hand and whisked the bride away.

Just as they ran around the corner, Mr. Suttle heard steps pounding down the sidewalk from the opposite direction. "Have you seen my daughter and a young man?" he asked John.

"You are too late. I just married them," said John.

The father grinned a little sheepishly and said, "I don't much care if I am," and went on back to the house to tell the sorrowing mother of the bride.

Since that first wedding John has married couples in all conceivable places and under a variety of circumstances. Ceremonies have been performed in the home, in church, in autos, in buggies, on the street, and in his own home.

He has never married what is usually known in Tennessee or Kentucky as a "child bride" but has married girls as young as fourteen years of age. "Some girls are almost grown by then," he adds. On the other extreme of life, he has married couples who approached the Biblical three score and ten station in life.

Three o'clock in the morning is the earliest he has ever been called up for a wedding. Ruth Wacaster of Waco, who was nursing supervisor at the Rutherfordton Hospital and whom he had baptized some years before, called:

"Will you marry me to Tommy Toms at three o'clock in the morning?" It was war time and nurses were scarce. She would have only a short time off.

"Why certainly," he replied. "Just come on to my house." Ruth and Tom came. Then Pastor Suttle thought of something. "We will have to have witnesses. Who will

be up at this time of night?" He thought of something else and made a telephone call.

In about five minutes two big, burly policemen with guns at their hips and flashlights in hand were at the door.

"What's the trouble, Preacher?" the leader asked.

"No trouble at all," said John with a twinkle in his eye. "I just wanted to invite you to a wedding." The two policemen were the witnesses.

One of the strangest requests for a wedding was to be married on a bridge. In the heart of Shelby, within a block of the court house, Sumter Street crosses over the Southern Railway. The overhead bridge is high, almost fifty feet above the tracks. "We want you to marry us on this bridge at nine o'clock at night. You face south and we will face north toward the Big Dipper and the North Star," they said.

"That is where I married them. I didn't ask why, and they did not tell me. I suppose they must have had some sentimental reason, such as that being where they became engaged, or ventured the first kiss . . ."

Some of the weddings have been a little less than formal. For instance, the one near El Bethel in Cherokee County a few miles southwest of Blacksburg. He had held a meeting there the previous summer and had been invited to come back for bird hunting.

While going across the field hunting birds, he happened to pass a house where a large crowd of people was gathered. The house was sitting on top of a knoll, and there was a long winding lane running up to the house. In just a moment he saw a man come running across the field waving at him and gesticulating as if he wanted him to stop. He stopped, and the man came up to him insisting that he come on over to the house.

"I'm on a hunting trip and I have this friend on down the road who is expecting me."

"But we have a wedding we want you to perform. Preacher Moorehead was supposed to perform this wedding

but he could not come and we are ready for the wedding to start and can't find a preacher."

So Brother Suttle, being willing to oblige, went on up the little red lane, entered the house and there he saw what he described as the ugliest woman he had ever seen in all his life. She was first, too old to get married; second, red-headed; third, had crossed eyes; and fourth, of all things, had on a dress that looked "fit to go to a tacky party". The dress had red bows, not of ribbon, but of calico on plain black cloth. The bows were fluffed and frilled in a manner to make her look like a witch.

What astounded the young preacher was that just as soon as he had said the last words of the wedding ceremony and was about to bow for a prayer, the groom turned quickly to his readheaded siren and kissed her, then turned her loose so quickly that the parson did not even get to begin the prayer.

He was told later that it was the custom in this community for the preacher always to kiss the bride first and that this young swain had vowed that no preacher was going to kiss his bride before he did, so he kissed her before the prayer.

"One of the nicest things about that wedding was it didn't last very long so I went on down to my friend's house and joined him for the hunt," said John.

Mrs. Suttle has always been interested in the weddings John performed since he usually gave her the fees from the weddings. "That is the only income I have ever received from our married life," said Mrs. Suttle.

"I remember when we lived in Johnston County, John went to the fair one day. There were a number of people from Smithfield and the surrounding country at the fair. One couple had bought their license to be married before leaving home and brought it with them to Raleigh and asked him if he would marry them on the fair ground.

"They were very much disappointed when John told them that they had to be married in the county in which they bought their license. They decided to wait until the

next day. However, John thought a little and solved their problem by asking, 'When are you going back?'

"The reply was, 'This afternoon.'

" 'Well', he said, 'so am I. You get on the same train and we'll ride together and be married on the way to Smithfield.'

"They did just this, and as soon as the train rolled out of Wake County into Johnston County, all of the friends on the train were called together in the same car. John surprised them all by saying, 'Come on folks, let's go to a wedding!'

"He performed the legal ceremony. Some of the men lifted the bride and groom up to the ceiling of the car and everybody was so excited that one man threw the groom's hat out of the train window."

Again, Mrs. Suttle reported that one day a couple drove up while she was working in the yard and asked if the preacher could marry them.

"I suppose so. Get out and come in."

"No, we'll stay in the car."

"He said, 'Well, sit where you are and I will talk from here.' John said to me, 'I figured that if they were that hard to move, once I got them hitched they would never get a divorce'."

An amusing sidelight of a wedding is one in which he helped to tie the knot for one of his preacher brothers, the Reverend W. G. Camp, now pastor at Sandy Run Church in Mooresboro, North Carolina.

Mr. Camp did not get married until rather late in life since he had to care for his mother and invalid sister. However, after the ceremony of a beautiful wedding, he was asked to kiss the bride, which he did. Mr. Suttle said he heard two women actually talking about it in church later after the service was over and the conversation went something like this: "The way he made a lot of noise, he must not have had any experience." The other woman said, "A preacher that can kiss like that must have had a lot of experience." Mr. Suttle delights in telling of this

conversation in the presence of Brother Camp. Even after telling this story they remain good friends.

He performed the marriage ceremony of only two of his children, marrying Elizabeth to Mr. W. J. Erwin, now President of the Dan River Cotton Mills of Danville, Virginia. He married Esther to Mr. D. R. Sibley, who is Vice-President of Aetna Life Insurance Company of Hartford, Connecticut. The other daughter, Bertie Lee, was married to Dr. Joe Cabiness by the late Reverend L. R. Pruitt of Boiling Springs and Charlotte. Mr. Pruitt was one of Mr. Suttle's closest ministerial friends and associates.

Not all couples have complete presence of mind when they come to the very unusual experience of getting married. One nervous bridegroom was so anxious to get away after the ceremony, he excitedly shook hands with Preacher Suttle and shouted, "And may ye have a merry Christmas and a Happy New Year".

He reports that some of the worst troubles with nervous couples have been in the matter of holding hands. He said in a good many instances he has not only had to tell the parties to join their right hands but has even had to place one right hand in the other right hand. Apparently they were so excited or so concerned and so self-conscious that they did not know one hand from the other.

He had a little difficulty with a couple on one occasion in which he asked the man to say whether or not he would take this woman to be his lawfully wedded wife and if so, to say, "I do". He asked him several times to say the necessary word and the good brother wouldn't say a word. Finally he did blurt out, "I do" in such a loud manner that Brother Suttle himself forgot what he was next supposed to say.

Over in Marshall, John reported that he married a one-eyed man to a redheaded woman. The marriage lasted about two weeks. He later saw the man on the street and asked him what had happened. The man replied, "That was the meanest woman in the world. If I had had two

good eyes that day I believe I could have seen what I was doing."

Brother John has the distinction of having performed a wedding with the longest service on record. The wedding lasted from 8:00 o'clock one evening until around 10:30 o'clock the following morning.

It was in Louisville while he was a student pastor that the groom and his timid young bride came asking to be married. The wedding was at the bride's home. When they stood up to be married, John noticed the bride was a little nervous and pale but thought that was not too unusual.

He asked the groom the usual questions to which he got the usual answers, "I do" and "I will". Then, when he turned to the bride to ask her the same questions, she fainted dead away and lay in an unconscious stupor from which she could not be aroused.

The distraught family threw water in her face, rubbed her arms and legs and made her breathe spirits of ammonia, but to no avail. She did not wake up. A doctor was called and he could not wake her.

Along about 12:00 o'clock that night the frantic groom sought out the minister and asked, "What sort of a fix am I in now?" Brother John replied, "So far as I can see you are married to her but she is not married to you."

After a night's sleep, however, the bride felt better and insisted she wanted to go on with the ceremony. About 10:30 o'clock, Brother John finished tying the knot in what he thinks is the longest wedding ever held.

He has never charged a set fee for performing a marriage ceremony and no couple has refused to pay him at least a little sum. The fees have ranged from 25 cents to as much as \$30. Only recently a prominent business man in Cleveland County came up to John and handed him a \$5 bill. He had promised to pay him 35 years ago when he was married and confessed that this was the first time that he had \$5 extra. In fact, he only had 35 cents in his

pocket when he was married; not even enough to finance the honeymoon immediately in front of him.

John had been preaching in country churches nearly twenty years before anyone asked him to be married in church. Back in those days it was just not the custom to be married in church.

In the first place, marriages and weddings had always been more of a private and personal nature, and the general public was not as much interested in the average wedding as now. Another reason for being married in some place besides the church was that the rural church was not a very delightful place in which to be married. The buildings were poorly lighted; there was poor seating; it was hard to arrange a lovely wedding in such a place. There was very little heat. It was hard to decorate, and the bride's home or some friend's home was a much better place.

It would have been very hard to light a large old wooden church building with a few small candles. Mr. Suttle still has the old candle molds about six inches long, three-quarters of an inch in diameter which his mother used to make candles for lighting the church house at Beaver Dam, but even the light from a hundred such candles would have been very poor for a wedding.

Along the way Mr. Suttle picked up the proper clothes for marrying couples in any kind of wedding, whether in a church, in a home, on the street, or at the court house. He had his regular preaching suit. Also, a formal suit which was a Prince Albert "cut-away" with a top hat. Also, the claw hammer tails and a white tie, and an ordinary tuxedo suit. In addition, he has several different kinds of shirts with studs and cuffs and the conventional black shoes.

One thing distresses Brother Suttle about the marriage of the present day couple. "That is the problem of divorce. I am told that one in four of all the couples being married in this day and time will end or has already ended in the divorce court," he said.

"I do not believe my batting average is that bad. In

fact, I believe of the couples whom I have married in a church or who were married in their own home or at the home of a Christian friend, there are very few that will ever be broken by divorce.

"Nonetheless, I do feel that the divorce problem is becoming one of the gravest problems on the American scene. I believe the tremendous changes in the American way of life is one of the contributing factors. There would be fewer divorces now if the groom took his bride far out into the country into a remote home where they could work together, suffer together, play together, pray together, and rear their family together, without the distracting influences of modern civilization.

"I think the time spent in building a home and cementing and solidifying the influences of Christian partnership certainly are necessary elements in making a marriage permanent."

There would be fewer divorces if young couples in this day and time would retain the romance and flame of youthful ardor as Mr. Suttle does for his bride. For example, on their fiftieth Wedding Anniversary John went to the florist and ordered fifty golden roses. He didn't ask the price or try to bargain.

"I want the finest ones you can get to give to my wife." He then noticed that the florist hesitated and said, "Well, Brother John, that's over four dozen roses and these roses are \$3 a dozen."

"I don't care how much they cost. If they cost \$3 for each rose, I want fifty. You may think a poor country preacher can't pay for them, but I will buy them if I have to sell something. I want to give them to my wife. Any woman who will put up with me for fifty years deserves a golden rose for each year she has done it."

Mrs. Suttle got the roses.

Only a few of the weddings Mr. Suttle has performed have been amusing, interesting, or one might say, unusual. As a rule, the ceremony joins together two of the fine young people who met in one of his churches and who

knew him and respected him and wanted him to share the high point of their lives by uniting them in the ceremony of marriage.

The first couple he married in Cleveland County was Mr. Fields Young to Miss Nina Lowery, who later became the parents of some of Cleveland County's most prominent business men and who at the present time are prominent laymen in Baptist work in the Kings Mountain Association. They are Fields, Jr., Carlos and Lamar Young of Shelby.

"There has been little change in the marriage laws except for the fact that we now require physical examinations and blood tests. In fact, there has been little change in marriage throughout all these years. It is still essentially a man and woman agreeing to agree all the rest of their life and signing a contract to that effect. It also carries a deeply religious significance, and I think when we lose this religious significance we lose a lot in the institution of marriage."

XX

A May Funeral For A December Demise

"NEARER MY GOD TO THEE"

O Death, where is thy sting?

I Corinthians 15:55

John has presided at more funerals than weddings since it always takes two at a wedding and usually one at a funeral.

He is at his very best at a time of crisis when death has entered a home. In the first place, he usually has known the family, has known their circumstances, their ups and downs, their vicissitudes, their characteristics and personalities, and he knows just what to say that will make them feel better at such a time.

He usually has a verse of Scripture, perhaps a whole passage of Scripture which he can quote by heart; a kind word, something of encouragement, and always a cheery, friendly smile; a little pat on the shoulder with an admonition that death comes to us all, that it has a real and true meaning, and that there is always something beyond.

He was always called upon to participate in the funeral of his own members, but he was so widely known, so ap-

proved universally, and so liked in his county, that other ministers and members of families have called upon him from time to time to take part in funeral services of members of other denominations. His prayers and his abilities to say just the right thing at the right time, not too much or not too little, have characterized him in an outstanding way.

"Even funerals have changed a lot during the course of my ministry," Brother John says. "In the old days all the coffins were black. They were pointed at the ends when people could afford a sure enough coffin. Time was, however, when we didn't even have coffins but buried our dead in plain pine boxes. A shroud, which was a heavy cloth sewn together, was used to wrap the dead.

"It was pretty hard on a preacher in those days because he was expected to drive his horse and buggy to the residence of the man and then to the church and back home, or perhaps to see some of the sorrowing relatives. A funeral would take a full day's time.

"Nowadays, we have paved roads and fine ambulances or hearses to carry the body. They are put away in such nice caskets with such beautiful floral arrangements that death is not so horrible or terrifying as it was in the old days. Undertakers have made death and dying much easier. Doctors and hospitals have relieved much of the pain.

"Death is just as real now as it was in the old days, and the separation can be just as final, but I believe we are making some improvement in a Christian approach, with more color, with more appropriate services and with better music and in having undertakers to handle a great many of the details."

One morning in May 1900, a man appeared at the parsonage door. He said he was from the country near Smithfield and that his mother had died in January. The weather was too bad to conduct the funeral then, so he wanted John to preach it the first Sunday in May. John readily

consented, knowing that there were no paved roads and not a very well kept road of any kind.

Imagine his surprise when he got there to be asked to preach the funeral of a granddaughter of the deceased. John replied, "I did not know the child had died."

The man said, "She died the first year of the Civil War."

John told the father he thought it best not to mention the child as he would not recognize it, if it could appear again to him.

He has been called upon to assist in services for the highest and lowest men in Cleveland County. Some of the very poorest tenant farmers have had his services. He also assisted in the funeral of the late O. Max Gardner, the county's most illustrious citizen and his own cousin, who died in New York of a heart attack just before he was to sail for England as Ambassador to the Court of St. James. Thousands of men of state and national prominence came to Shelby to hear the little preacher give one of the finest descriptions of and tributes to a son of this county.

Again, he preached the last rites of Thomas Dixon, novelist, minister, author, lecturer, and playwright who had given birth to the idea of "The Birth of a Nation", a movie put on the screen by the late D. W. Griffith which had thrilled more people than any other movie, until another southern masterpiece, "Gone With the Wind", was shown to millions of fans.

Even the somberness of death and all its attendant sorrows could not keep John Suttle from telling a funny story about it. One of his favorites is about the two women who were talking about their husbands who had passed already to the great beyond.

"What did your husband die of?" inquired one. "Well, I don't rightly remember," answered the other. "It was so long ago. As I remember he just stopped breathing." The first one responded, "Oh, well, my husband didn't die that way at all. He breathed right up to the very last."

XXI

"I Honor My Fathers And Brothers In The Ministry"

"FAITH OF OUR FATHERS"

I must be about my Father's business.

Luke 2:49

Nothing is more amazing about Brother John than the company he has kept. His fathers and brothers in the ministry have been of the highest caliber. As he let generous portions of his mantle fall upon sons in the ministry, perhaps it was in no small part due to the fact that he inherited generous portions of great mantles from the prophets who preceded him and were his contemporaries.

Brother John was born into the company of a great number of tall, stalwart, stately, and saintly men in the ministry who, at the time of his birth, were carving out a wilderness in Piedmont North Carolina. In those dark and dreary days following the Civil War, many of the people had nothing to turn to except religion. Their crops were gone, many of their farms and homes were gone, and in so many homes sons and fathers were gone. Faith in God and their once-a-month meetings at the community church, along with an occasional visit of the minister into

the home, and their daily prayer and Bible reading made up most of their religious practice.

As these mighty men of religion rode horseback or drove a buggy from one community to another in Cleveland and Rutherford counties, John Suttle and his family became acquainted with most of them. His grandfather, Elder Joseph Suttle, had cut the pattern. First of all, Joseph was a dedicated man; a minister inspired to preach the gospel, who was called to go mainly into the rural churches to preach and teach and hold fellowship with the brethren.

John does not remember his grandfather. No doubt, the stories told to him by his family left a stamp upon the young man, and he was greatly impressed by the fact that by the time grandfather was 34 years of age, he was one of the most prominent ministers in Western North Carolina. He was pastor of the church at Double Springs and one of the leaders in the movement to found the Kings Mountain Association, which was organized at his church in the fall of 1850.

He died of typhoid fever, a premature and untimely death, on May 26, 1861, and the following inscription upon his tombstone shows what a man he must have been: "Of the public virtues and services of this good man it is unnecessary to speak. His liberal and unaffected hospitality, his singular moderation and equanimity are well known, and held in pleasing but mournful remembrance.

"None was more illustrious in life, none was more happy in death. He left this world cheered by his benediction of his church, to whom he left the inheritance of his fame and the memory of his bright example; and was born to that world where the pure in heart meet their God."

Joseph Suttle was buried at the Suttle family cemetery on the home plantation about five miles west of Shelby on land now owned by his great-grandson, J. L. Suttle, Jr.

More about the character of this remarkable grandfather is recounted in an article by J. H. Yarboro which was printed in the *Mountain Eagle*, a Shelby paper, a few days

after the death of Elder Suttle. The article is found in the appendix of this book.

The minister who wrote the eulogy to Joe Suttle was one of the best educated preachers in Cleveland County. It is said that he spent a great deal more time than most ministers in study and that his interest in obtaining an education was so great, he rode a mule 225 miles all the way from Shelby to Wake Forest College to get an education.

He was the first college trained pastor in this section. It is said that on the way to Wake Forest he stopped at the home of some well-to-do merchant in central North Carolina, and this man was so impressed with his earnestness and zeal and desire to preach the gospel that he gave him a substantial sum of money to continue his education.

Aside from his grandfather, the man who looms tallest in the mind of John Suttle as "*THE PREACHER*" was the Reverend G. W. Rollins—born August 7, 1828, in Cleveland County, North Carolina. Mr. Rollins was not only the first preacher he ever heard, but his family and friends referred to him often and praised him many times. He spent the night in the Suttle home several times while John was a child.

John recalls Mr. Rollins as a middlesized man, a very earnest speaker, a man who was so intent upon what he was saying he would allow himself to get out of breath, and then would suck in a new supply while he was completing a sentence. Nonetheless, he was forceful, effective, and successful not only in making friends, but in winning converts to the Cause.

At one time he served as moderator of the Sandy Run Association.

He later had a son, G. W., Jr., who preached in many churches in this section. Mr. Rollins married a Padgett of Rutherford County and was the grandfather of the Reverend D. W. Digh, now pastor of Bethel Church in Shelby.

Undoubtedly, the most colorful, persuasive and flamboyant minister who impressed John Suttle while he was young was the Elder Thomas Dixon, first moderator of the Kings Mountain Baptist Association. He was nominated to this office by Joseph Suttle, and his popularity was so great that during the ensuing years he was moderator for nine other terms. He was born December 24, 1820, in York County, South Carolina.

It is not generally known that Elder Dixon had a tragedy attend his early ministry. He shot and killed a prominent physician near Shelby. Apparently it concerned some jealousy between the two men regarding Elder Dixon's wife. The story is that he was traveling north from Shelby on the Shelby-Fallston road where he went to hunt some squirrels. He had a small rifle with him. He was accompanied by his son, Clarence. On the way they suddenly noticed the physician, who had threatened his life on several occasions, standing behind a tree, apparently making an attempt to way-lay him and shoot him.

Elder Dixon, who had an eagle eye and a good aim, whipped out his squirrel rifle and got in the first shot. The grand jury never brought in a true bill and no indictment papers ever were served upon him because of the evidence of young A. C. Dixon who was only a child at that time. He told the judge and solicitor a very straightforward story of how it happened, and apparently Elder Dixon was acting in his own self-defense.

Elder Dixon built a fine home near Buffalo Creek just south of the New Prospect Church where he was pastor. This home has been torn down for about twenty years and has been replaced on the same spot with a very nice home in which the Cline family now lives.

The story is told on old Preacher Dixon that he was crossing a river and got stuck in the mud. He couldn't get the mules to pull the wagon out, and the old colored man who was driving tried his very best to get them to pull it out.

Finally he told the parson, "If you'll let me cuss 'em,

I believes they'll make it." Whereupon the Elder said softly, "Well, Mose, just do as you like. I'll walk on up the road a little piece." The mules came out quickly.

He had the reputation of being one of the smoothest moderators in North Carolina and if he were presiding, Associational business went along on time. Brother Suttle says that is where he got part of his inspiration for running a meeting smoothly and on time, and he always tried to do that in all his meetings.

Some evidence of Dixon's popularity is evidenced by the fact that he was pastor of the New Prospect Baptist Church for 56 years, the longest term of ministry in one church of any person in the Kings Mountain Association and possibly a record for the entire State of North Carolina. He had from twelve to fifteen great sermons and preached them over and over, many times adding one new sermon per year.

He was married to Miss Amanda Elizabeth McAfee of near York, South Carolina, who came from a family of very brilliant ancestors. Some people have said that the Dixon children inherited their great brilliance from their mother but Brother Suttle says Elder Tom was brilliant in his own right.

Elder Dixon was a leader of leaders. He was keenly intelligent, well educated, a selfmade man with a tongue and wit as sharp as a two edged sword, and was a minister of such unquestioned character and possibility that he seldom met his match in the pulpit or public debate.

Dixon, Sr., was one of the most striking ministers ever to appear in a pulpit in Cleveland County. He was tall, slender, handsome, and had piercing eagle eyes which could look straight through his congregation or any person to whom he was talking. He kept his hair well trimmed and wore a chin beard which was trimmed and pointed. He was always neatly dressed, a born orator, a forceful speaker, and an unusually talented scholar, politician, trader, real estate investor, and a great judge of human nature.

One of his most famous expressions was, "He is a wishy-washy milk-of-cider sort of Baptist". This expression he used to described Baptists who had departed from the faith.

Elder Dixon was an excellent business man. He traded considerably in real estate and for a long time operated a general store in Shelby where he bought and sold cotton and cotton goods. He was a student of political economics although he never ran for office.

Apparently he passed this privilege on to his son, Tom, Jr., who ran for office and represented Cleveland County in the State Legislature before he himself was old enough to vote.

The first time he heard Elder Dixon, John went with his father to hear him deliver the charge at an ordination of a young preacher. He reported that the preacher who preached the sermon spoke for an hour; then a second preacher who delivered the Bible preached for nearly an hour. When Elder Tom Dixon got up he said, "My young Brother, preach the Word. Preach nothing but the Word, but preach the whole Word," and then sat down.

Elder Dixon had a very keen mind and also had the good sense and judgment to use such a short speech as a rebuke to the long winded preachers who had taken up most of the meeting time.

One of the most famous of Elder Dixon's sermons was on "Gideon's Band"; another was about the Israelites crossing the Red Sea and also one about David and Goliath.

Elder Tom was the father of Thomas Dixon, Jr., nationally known author and playwright whose claim to fame was the great novel, *The Klansman*, which was the basis for the later great movie, *The Birth of a Nation*. He was one of the most prolific and forceful writers North Carolina has ever produced and perhaps his fame will be more enduring from his writing.

Brother Suttle heard young Tom deliver his first political speech before he was 21. He campaigned for the legislature and was elected before he was 21 years of age

but did not go to the assembly until after he had passed his 21st birthday.

Mr. Suttle remembers well his electrifying oratory and the brilliance portrayed when he wrote and presented a play based upon the book of Esther. He and a former Shelby resident, Mr. Audie Rudisall, gave it in Shelby and at many other places over Western North Carolina.

After the end of his career in Raleigh as clerk to the Federal Court judge, Tom Dixon, Jr., was buried in Shelby and Mr. Suttle assisted at his funeral.

Another son, Amzi Clarence, perhaps was the greatest minister of all, having filled a number of important pastorates and later filling the pulpit of the "incomparable" Spurgeon in the Tabernacle at London, England. He was born July 6, 1854, in Shelby, North Carolina. He was graduated from Wake Forest College and continued a study of theology in Greenville, South Carolina.

The story is told on the brilliant A. C. Dixon that he once went to his father, Elder Tom, for advice. Young Dixon had received a call to an important pulpit in Baltimore at approximately three times the salary he was getting in a North Carolina church.

This son was a great preacher but had not developed the astuteness in financial affairs attributed to his father. Elder Tom is reported to have told him, "Amzi, I believe if I were you, I would accept the call. Where there is more money, there is bound to be more sin."

Frank Dixon, among other things, became governor of Alabama. Daughter Delia, known as Dr. Delia Dixon Carroll, was one of the pioneer women physicians in North Carolina and was for many years attending physician at Meredith College. A younger sister, Miss Addie Dixon, has been known nationally as a writer and teacher.

The Reverend G. M. Webb—born November 14, 1831, in Rutherford County, North Carolina—was known

among his friends and ministers as Uncle Milt. He was the father of two of the most famous judges Cleveland County has produced. They were Judge James L. Webb of the Superior Court bench and Judge E. Y. Webb of the Federal bench. He also had two other sons, the late George and Charles Webb.

Mr. Suttle remembers the Reverend G. M. Webb as a stout man with heavy shoulders, strong, imposing, a leader, and a man of very strong conviction. He was a Baptist and a Democrat and did not hesitate to speak his convictions about the doctrinal features of the Baptist Church and about the saving principles of the Democratic party.

One of the first meetings which Brother Suttle helped in outside of Cleveland County was at the Long Creek Baptist Church in Gaston County where Brother Webb was pastor and was holding the annual revival meeting.

The Webbs were somewhat related to J. W. Suttle since both his grandmothers were Blantons, and the Webbs were closely related to the Blanton family. Webb's wife and Mr. Suttle's Grandmother Wray were sisters. Pastor Webb was clerk of the Kings Mountain Association in the years 1867 through 1872 inclusively.

In spite of the fact that the Reverend G. M. Webb had only a small amount of formal education, he was a self-made man and educated himself. He saw to it that all his children had a Christian education.

Elder Dove Pannell, who was an old man when John was a little boy, was remembered mainly as the very important preacher who gave the introductory sermon at the organization of the Kings Mountain Association of which John was to be moderator for forty years. He saw this old gentleman only a few times while he was young but he heard his parents and other ministers tell what an influential man Dove Pannell was in the new Association.

Not only was he a minister, but he was a soldier in the Civil War and a Civil Magistrate after the war. He was especially prominent in leadership of the temperance

movement in North Carolina and was highly regarded for his abilities as a diplomat to compromise the disagreement of good people with regard to the use of making or drinking alcoholic beverages.

The title for Elder Pannell's most notable sermon which he preached in 1851 before the Kings Mountain Association was, "The Hour is Come".

Dove Pannell had a younger brother, Martin Pannell, who for many years was associated with the Beaver Dam Baptist Church. He had less ability and was not as much a leader as Dove but, nevertheless, was a good man and made lasting impressions on John, whose first religious experiences were at Beaver Dam.

John R. Logan was not a minister but a layman and a Deacon who was one of the most important figures in the early history of the Kings Mountain Association. For many years he was clerk of the Association and was the author of "Logan's History of the Broad River and Kings Mountain Baptist Associations". These historical and biographical sketches cover the men and events from 1800 to 1882.

He was a man of very strong convictions and positive beliefs and in his writings he describes very accurately the men and women of his day and time and portrays their weaknesses as well as strength. He would criticize even the best of ministers for any personal habit which he thought a Christian ought not to indulge in. For instance, he was highly critical of the use of tobacco by Dr. A. L. Stough, pastor of the First Baptist Church of Shelby.

He was the father and grandfather of two of Cleveland County's best known sheriffs. The old Logan homeplace is about three miles south of Shelby on the Sulphur Springs road.

The Reverend Phillip Ramsour Elam was one of the older preachers in the Association who impressed young John. He was a Civil War hero, having been a lieutenant in his company and after severe fighting at Gettysburg,

had spent nine months in a federal prison. He was not only a man of the soil and a tireless worker, but was also one of the earliest missionaries for a new movement called the Sunday School. Elam believed that in addition to preaching, church members must study the Bible and other good books in order to be successful evangelists and to make their church more effective in the community.

Elder Baylus Cade was an outlander. That is, he was born in some place outside North Carolina; perhaps Virginia. Mr. Suttle remembers him as a very large, portly, 250-pound, very handsome man with the typical aristocratic dress of sideburns.

He was a fine scholar and influential speaker and was so much of a book worm he was virtually an encyclopedia. Great numbers of people would invite him in to their homes just for the privilege of hearing him talk and of asking him questions about everything from religion to farming.

The content of his mind was so voluminous that many times he seemed to be dogmatic especially in the pulpit or in a debate at the Associational meeting. However, when he was outside the church merely talking with the brethren, he was said to be as tender and sympathetic as a woman.

Brother Suttle asked Baylus one day why it was that when he went into the pulpit he developed such an attitude of animosity and belligerence. He replied, "John, it is not that at all. It is just that I am so desperately in earnest."

The Reverend J. D. Hufham not only was a minister of prominence in Cleveland County, but he was highly beloved in all of North Carolina. For a time he was pastor of the First Baptist Church in Shelby and later was a member of the faculty of Wake Forest College. For many years he was an officer in the Baptist State Convention.

He was known throughout North Carolina as being

slightly eccentric and became widely known as the "walking Delegate".

"At every meeting of the Baptist State Convention and at many of the Associational meetings old Brother Hufham could be seen walking up and down the aisles around the auditorium or back of the pulpit; sometimes with hands folded behind him as if bound, but always walking. Nonetheless, he was an eloquent leader of the denomination and at one time was editor of the *Biblical Recorder* and was editor of that paper during the Civil War when it was burned by the Yankees. Even though his paper was burned and he was forced to stop writing for a time, he always remained an unreconstructed rebel," says John.

It was said that he was highly active in politics in old Scotland County shortly after the Civil War. On one occasion they were trying to carry an election to disfranchise the Negro. The Yankee Carpetbaggers had set up election machinery and had urged all the Negroes to vote. Brother Hufham reputedly went from one ballot box to another urging the citizens to get out and vote saying, "Let's carry the election boys. Carry it honestly if you can, but carry it."

The Reverend A. C. Irvin is a man who perhaps can best be described as the saintliest minister ever to preside over a congregation or to attend an Association in the early Kings Mountain days.

The late Dr. Hufham was attending a meeting of the Kings Mountain Association with Brother Suttle when Mr. Irvin came in immaculately dressed, with a pointed beard, finely combed hair, delicate features, saintly smile, and walked down the aisle. Hufham said to Brother Suttle, "No man can be as good as Abe Irvin looks like he is."

But he was a fine moderator, an excellent preacher, and perhaps was one of the most genuinely loved ministers ever to live in this section. He became the father of Jim Irvin, Pink Irvin, John Irvin, and Miss Ollie Irvin who married Dr. John Wood of Boiling Springs, N. C.

Reverend A. L. Stough was a German-born immigrant who had quite an accent but who was also a great scholar. He was pastor of the First Baptist Church in Shelby when Brother Suttle was a small boy. He was criticized considerably by the Elder J. R. Logan for using tobacco. However, in spite of his tobacco chewing, he was so popular that a good many people in Cleveland County were named for him. Among those are Stough Wray, Stough Beam, Stough Lattimore, and Stough Hendricks.

To begin with, Elder Stough was educated for the Catholic priesthood but in Norfolk, Virginia, he was converted and baptized in 1847. He studied theology with Dr. George Purefoy for two years and then began to preach. Among his duties as a member of the Kings Mountain Association he became moderator of this body in 1879.

Along with his criticism of using tobacco, Elder Logan had to admit that he was an able minister. "Let Elder Stough, therefore, take the lead in a well directed crusade against the use of the 'sweet-scented poisonous plant of Virginia'."

The Reverend J. M. Bridges was known as "Big Mun" in contra-distinction to the Reverend B. M. Bridges who was known as "Little Mun". This particular J. M. Bridges was born and reared in the Lattimore section and was at one time pastor of the Pleasant Ridge Church. In fact, he led in the organization of that church. He was related to a great number of the Bridges in western Cleveland County and was an uncle of Mrs. D. G. Washburn.

John remembers "Big Mun" as being a very earnest preacher who had a habit of preaching so hard that it became necessary for him to suck in his breath, sometimes sucking so hard that one could see the veins sticking out on his neck.

Dr. B. W. Bussey, a popular minister, was a native of Georgia, an excellent preacher, and baptized John Suttle's brother, Joe.

Brother John also remembers a Dr. Willis who was president of the Shelby Female College and who was a very imposing, energetic and influential minister.

The Reverend R. L. Limerick was one of the ministers who officiated at the ordination of Brother Suttle. He was pastor of the Shelby First Church and had formerly been a machinist. He turned to preaching but did not take up the full ministry until later years.

Dr. W. A. Nelson was pastor of the First Baptist Church in Shelby. He was a large man. On one occasion he was baptizing Colonel Reuben McBrayer who was also a very large man. When they both got into the pool at the First Baptist Church and Dr. Nelson immersed Colonel McBrayer, the water overflowed out of the baptistry and came down in sheets over the pulpit.

The people smiled when this happened but they still were very much in love with Dr. Nelson. Although a native of Georgia, he became one of the most popular preachers ever to live in Shelby.

One of Mr. Suttle's keenest memories of great preachers is of the renowned Evangelist, Reverend Sam Jones. Jones was a Methodist but his services were highly attended when he came to this section to preach.

One of the illustrations Mr. Suttle remembers was Sam Jones' vivid description of the drunkard who was happy only when he was hilariously drunk, who lived in a hovel, whose children were naked and his wife in rags. He plowed an ox and thought he had bought the Kingdom of Heaven when on one occasion he gave \$5 to the church.

One of the institutions which is no longer in existence was that of an old country store in Shelby located at the present site of the Cleveland Hardware, operated by a Mr. Canady Barnett and a Mr. Edmund Lovelace. Mr. Barnett operated a type of grocery store and Mr. Lovelace had a machine and harness shop in the same building.

Every Monday a large group of people, including most of the ministers of the city, would gather around Canady Barnett's stove or out in front of the store and discuss problems of the past Sunday. They would swap yarns and fuss and argue over theological points and from time to time would accomplish some real good purpose.

John noted that at these old country store gatherings there was considerable jealousy among the ministers; one of the main reasons being on account of an annual church election. Preachers were not elected for life but just for a year. Neither were they "called" as Baptists now understand the call of a preacher.

Occasionally one minister would underbid the other and agree to preach at some certain church for a few dollars less than he knew one of his religious brothers had agreed to preach for. The average price paid for a salary at a rural church in that day and time was seldom over a hundred dollars and on many occasions was considerably less.

Preachers had to make up for this lack of income by following some other occupation, the most common being farming, although several operated a grocery store or a dry goods store, and some few had a trade such as carpentering, brick masonry, or machinist.

Brother John has been personally acquainted with every minister of all faiths who has come to this county the last three generations. He has been especially well acquainted with Baptist ministers since he was moderator of the Association and present at all meetings of any importance.

More than a hundred Baptist ministers, both active and inactive pastors in Cleveland County, now consider him the unofficial "dean" of ministerial gatherings.

Most of the ministers who were his associates and yoke fellows in the heyday of his most active career have either died or moved away. The Reverend W. A. Elam, who for many years was vice-moderator of the Kings Mountain Association, died in a traffic accident at his home in Franklinville several years ago. Other ministers who were quite prominent in rural work before their deaths include the

Reverend D. F. Putnam who was at Beaver Dam for a number of years and who was the Association's best known new church organizer in his time; Dr. C. J. Black of Bessemer City, who was a historian and author of note; the Reverend I. D. Harrill of Lattimore who represented a long line of preachers and teachers; the Reverends Rush Padgett, W. E. Lowe, D. G. Washburn and B. P. Parks.

Brother John always smiles when he recalls a trip to the mountains, which was probably a meeting of the Convention in Asheville, when he and Dr. Zeno Wall, the Reverend D. G. Washburn, and one or two others had a brush with the law.

"We were coming down the mountain, and swinging the curves caused Brother Gordon Washburn to become car sick," explains Brother John. "He stuck his head out the window both to get relief and to get fresh air. In the meantime, he lost his false teeth. We stopped and walked back up the mountain and looked all along the road for nearly a half mile but never did find those teeth. A highway patrolman came along and queried us about the matter and we explained that there was nothing wrong, that we were all preachers and one of us had lost his teeth. The patrolman looked at us as if he didn't know whether to believe us or take us all to jail."

Senator Lee B. Weathers says Brother John is not the kind of preacher about whom the following story is told. It seems this popular but very strict and orthodox Baptist preacher in a poor country church noticed one Sunday morning that among his hearers was a rather worldly but somewhat eccentric resident of a nearby town.

After the sermon was over the visiting eccentric shook hands with the country preacher and exploded, "Parson, that was a damn good sermon." Whereupon the good little man chided his guest, "I appreciate your saying so, but I have always insisted the church is no place for profanity or swearing."

"I thought it was a good sermon and I still think so,"

the visitor added. "I thought it was so good I put a hundred dollar bill in the collection plate."

"The hell you say," ejaculated the minister.

Cameron Shipp, a native of Lincoln County—former news editor of the *Shelby Daily Star* and now a writer of international fame in Hollywood—used to tease Brother John thus:

"I would not quote any swear words to a preacher like you but I wanted to tell you the difference between a modernist and a fundamentalist. The modernist says, 'There ain't no hell,' and the fundamentalist says, 'The hell there ain't'."

XXII

"My Sons In The Ministry Honor Me"

"TELL ME THE OLD, OLD STORY"

*Go ye into all the world
and preach the gospel to every creature.*

Matthew 16:15

A grain of wheat, when planted in the fall, sometimes will produce thirty, sixty, or even a hundred new grains of wheat the following summer. The Bible is very clear about this rate of reproduction and also is careful to note that the best soil, the best management, and the best wheat make the best crop.

If we count John Suttle's "Sons in the Ministry" along with Christian workers and those who have dedicated themselves to full time Christian service or who have gone to the Mission fields or are preparing themselves to go, we find that his little grains of wheat sown along the way during the past 65 years are not only producing thirty and sixty fold, but even a hundredfold.

Ten or more of these hundreds of workers have become outstanding in state and southwide importance in Baptist work either as ministers or as leaders in Christian Education or in Missionary enterprises. There has always been

something about this little man in the pulpit to attract young people and to inspire some of them to want to be preachers and teachers and to follow some line of Christian endeavor.

Consider what happened to a little freckled faced boy in the town of Benson in Johnston County in the year of 1905. His people were Primitive Baptists. They had not been very enthusiastic about his going to Sunday School or coming under the influence of John Suttle, who then was preacher at this little Mission church.

William C. Royal was one of 35 persons baptized in a mill stream that day. Just as the minister took the group down into the water, he asked the Lord that one of the young men in the group be called to the Ministry, if it were the Lord's will.

"From that moment to this day I have never had any doubt that Brother Suttle's prayer was my call to preach the Gospel of Christ. How many times I have been discouraged and defeated! Then my memory goes back to that prayer and a new strength and direction comes into my life." Thus speaks the Reverend William C. Royal, pastor of the First Baptist Church of Frederick, Maryland, and former president of the Maryland Baptist State Convention.

After Brother Suttle had prayed that day and the candidates were baptized and re-dressing out in the woods, little Royal said, "Tell me what I ought to do in our church." The young minister told the little boy he did not know of a great number of things he could do except to come to church regularly. Then he happened to think that the church had some new hymn books, so he appointed the small boy to be chief in charge of stacking hymn books. He relates that the boy did it so perfectly that it was a joy to see him stack the books.

Young Royal still wanted to do more in the church and asked the pastor if there was not something further he might do. So the minister asked him one night to lead in prayer. When the time came to stand up and pray, Royal

said hesitatingly, his mouth very dry, "O Good Lord," and failed to finish out his sentence. He stuttered and stammered with his face turning red and his neck swelling. His eyes filled with tears and finally he sat down in dismal failure. However, Mr. Suttle reports that a wave of spiritual power swept over the little meeting from that failure of his prayer and a second failure to explain why he could not pray. From then on a genuine revival broke out not only in the church, but in the entire community and it was a very successful revival meeting.

In retrospect W. C. Royal says of his teacher and pastor and Father in the Ministry, "In the many years I have been a pastor I have heard many great preachers: John H. Jowett, George W. Truett, J. L. White, Gilbury Laws, E. Y. Mullins, but to my mind and heart, the greatest of them all is John W. Suttle."

From baby sitting to gathering a million dollars has been the range of activities of Horace Easom of Shelby as he has served Baptists of North Carolina for over a half century. As a small boy, Horace Easom took care of the children in the home of the Suttles when John was pastor of the little church at Smithfield.

"I thought if anything happened while John was away at one of his speaking engagements I could put little Horace out one of the back windows and let him go for help while I was fighting off the intruders," says Mrs. Suttle. Luckily that never happened.

Since he first came under the influence of John Suttle in those early days, Horace Easom has had a most brilliant career as Minister of Music, Director of Education, Pastor's Assistant, Secretary of Brotherhood and Executive Secretary of the North Carolina Baptist Foundation.

Mr. Easom says, "Through the years I have been in constant touch with Brother John. He has had as much influence over my life as any other living man. It was he who was the first Minister to ask me to hold a revival meeting in one of his churches. Up to that time I had been only

a song leader. Since he started me off and gave me confidence I have held scores of revivals in various parts of North Carolina." Mr. Easom has been director of education and music at Southside Baptist Church in Wilmington, First Baptist Church of Asheville, First Baptist Church of Shelby, and for a time was at the great First Baptist Church in Dallas, Texas.

His biggest money raising job was that of raising one and a half million dollars through the churches for the re-location and enlargement of Wake Forest College at Winston-Salem.

However, most of the people who know Horace will remember him most often for his work as educational director for the First Baptist Church of Shelby, and being a part of the team of Wall and Easom. He was assistant to Dr. Zeno Wall, who for four terms was president of the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina.

Easom's work was no less brilliant than Dr. Wall's but was of a different nature. He directed the choir and the educational program. He is an organizer without peer. He can get anybody to agree to do anything and then tell them how to do it. He is an eternal optimist. If he ever becomes discouraged with his work anywhere his deacons and workers never know it. At Shelby he complemented Dr. Wall at every turn. Dr. Wall fired the big Gospel Guns and Mr. Easom made the surveys, timed the firing, directed the barrel and did the mop-up operations to make the barrage successful. Dr. Wall was the dynamo to help God furnish the power and Mr. Easom turned on all the little lights. The Wall and Easom story would make another book.

Says Mr. Easom of John Suttle, "I think he is one of the greatest Christians of his day because he is so good, sincere, and always has believed, preached, and practiced the simple Gospel of Jesus Christ. One of my most vivid recollections is how he told us stories of the Bible and the time honored stories of Uncle Remus when I was a little boy.

"One of my earliest and most important impressions of him was the way he fought the liquor traffic in Johnston County; fearlessly, never wavering, using every opportunity to give a testimony about the harmful effects of alcoholic beverages."

Jasper N. Barnette of Nashville, Tennessee, is not a preacher; however, there are few preachers, teachers, or speakers of any kind in the bounds of the Southern Baptist Convention who can hold an audience better than he or tell them more in half an hour when Mr. Barnette is asked to make a speech.

He is one of Brother John's boys. He was discovered first at South Shelby and later moved back to the country to his home church at Double Springs where he started a meteoric career as a Sunday School specialist, leader, and trainer of workers in Sunday School Enlargement and theory. At present he is retiring secretary of the Sunday School Department of the Baptist Sunday School Board of the Southern Baptist Convention.

When John Suttle came to Double Springs in 1918, Jasper Barnette had been married to Edna Hawkins only a short time. He was a young farmer trying to make a living raising cotton. In the early days just following World War I this was pretty hard to do.

Jasper had a pair of little yellow mules which he hooked to a "gee-whiz" and guided them with small cotton plow lines. He was known as one of the best operators of a gee-whiz in the community. His insatiable interest in Sunday School work soon proved to the Association and to the state that he could do that kind of work even better than he could plow cotton.

At Double Springs in 1917, J. N. Barnette became Superintendent of the Sunday School which had only six classes, 173 members, and no classrooms. A men's class was meeting outside under an oak tree in good weather and not at all when it rained. He soon made rooms with curtains, graded the classes, added over a hundred members

to the Sunday School and led the way for the church to erect a new building at a cost of approximately \$30,000. When his work closed in 1921, the Sunday School had attained the A-1 Standard and had laid the ground work for attaining the Double "A" Standard rating in 1922 which was reached under the leadership of A. V. Washburn, Sr., and Fred E. Greene.

Double Springs then had the honor of being the first rural Sunday School in the Southern Baptist Convention to attain this rating and was the only one to hold it for five consecutive years.

E. L. Middleton, who then was Sunday School Secretary for the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina, wrote and asked Brother Suttle if he knew anyone who could take over Sunday School work for the entire state and go from one part of the state to another in the role of general agent or field secretary, teaching study courses and organizing new Sunday Schools. Mr. Suttle wrote him back that J. N. Barnette was the man and that "no one church in the state or in the south is big enough to hold him."

"Mr. Middleton sent me a questionnaire about two feet long with numerous questions in regard to Jasper Barnette's qualifications. I didn't even fill it out but just wrote on the margin and sent the blank questionnaire back saying, 'I told you he could do the job'."

About a year later, after Mr. Barnette had been to Raleigh as well as all over the State of North Carolina, Middleton saw Brother Suttle and shook his hand with a grin and said, "You were absolutely right. He is a marvel." Indeed, he was such a marvelous organizer, speaker, and leader that before long the Sunday School Board at Nashville had asked him to come up higher into the job as Southwide Sunday School worker.

John Suttle likes to tell this story on Jasper: He had come by his little farm one day when Jasper was pulling the bell cords through the harness of the two little yellow mules in front of the gee-whiz and said, "Jasper, it looks

like we need to build a new church." Said Jasper, "Well, I'm sure we do Pastor, but Edna and I had been figuring on building a house. It looks like this old one of ours is going to fall in if we don't repair it or build a new one."

The pastor said, "Well, the Lord needs a new house too," and Barnette added, "Well, I think we can wait." From then on he left no stone unturned until the new church building was under construction.

One day while construction was proceeding it suddenly developed that the foreman told the pastor that the brick masons would have to stay out a day or two unless they could get more brick. The brick were in a box car on the railroad siding, but it was a very busy season. All the farmers were working in their crops and there was no one to haul brick. The pastor mentioned this dilemma to Jasper who told him, "You go back to the church and tell the foreman not to dismiss the brick layers. The brick will be there." After dark, when he had finished cultivating the cotton, he took an old kerosene lantern, opened the boxcar, and with his two little yellow mules and a small farm wagon, began hauling brick, whistling and singing at the same time. Some of the neighbors heard him out at the railway station and found out what he was doing; they, too, got their wagons and small carts and in a few hours all the necessary brick were at the church so the work could go on unhampered.

Both Brother John and J. N. Barnette compliment each other very highly.

Says Suttle of Jasper, "Except for grammar school and a short course in a music school in Virginia, Mr. Barnette had no formal education, but this is not to say that he is not now an educated man. His career of self-teaching, self-education, consecrated study and dedication is one of the most thrilling stories I know."

His thirst for knowledge continually made him borrow books, read all the commentaries and attend meetings of all kinds connected with church and Sunday School, until soon he knew more about the Bible and about the growing



Mrs. Suttle and 2,000 Pitchers

Sunday School movement than any other man in North Carolina. Then from 1921-1927 he was Associate in the Sunday School Department of the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina. From 1927-1935 he was Associate in the Sunday School Administration Department at Nashville where he served under the Sunday School Board's renowned Arthur Flake. From 1935-1943 he was Secretary of Field Promotion of the Sunday School Board and since 1944 has been its general Secretary of the Sunday School Department.

In addition, he is editor of the *Sunday School Builder*, the department magazine, and also is author of several books in his field. He has written numbers of articles and pamphlets about teaching and training, organizing, and building a Sunday School.

Says Barnette of Brother John. "He is dedicated to his task, intelligent, eager, plans well, and works very hard. The whole record of his life has been that of unselfish Christian service. Through the years he has cultivated a pleasing manner, a delightful personality, a regard and interest for others. He has a good word for everyone. He is free from ill speaking. His modesty is worthy of wide imitation. He has tried earnestly and has succeeded gloriously in making many friends. He is full of generous sympathies."

D. P. Brooks, now of Raleigh, and a native of Double Springs, used to be the champion slingshot shooter of his community. He was short, small, freckle faced, wiry, and about the size of the pastor who baptized him.

He is Associate Secretary of the Sunday School Department of the North Carolina Baptist State Convention and has held pastorates in the Chowan Association where he was also Missionary.

"Brother Suttle has meant a great deal to me and has been a constant source of wonderment. To try to write it in words is much harder than talking about it," he says.

"One of the things which has impressed me deeply about

Brother Suttle is his ability to laugh at himself. He never takes himself too seriously. When one is as small as he is physically, he is usually sensitive about it. I know!

"I have never seen him embarrassed by his size. He jokes about it and seems almost to make an asset of it. He takes the same objective attitude toward other things. If he is criticized, he does not seem to be troubled in the least. He can joke and laugh about it without getting steamed up. I remember his preaching once about the matter of criticizing people. He confessed that people sometimes criticized him. With all mock solemnity he said that he was just sorry for such people who had the nerve to 'criticize me'.

"Another thing which has amazed me all my life is his self-control and freedom from worry. When I asked him how in the world he could serve seven churches he joked, 'It is because I am so big and robust.' Then seriously he attributed it to the fact that as a young man he discovered that his rather delicate health would not permit him to worry. If he was to do his work, it would be necessary for him to learn how to do it with a minimum of strain and without worry. He succeeded in achieving this rare state.

"Nothing ever seemed to worry him day or night. He said that when he laid off his clothes at night, he laid off every worry and was asleep in a few minutes after retiring.

"It is not accidental that a number of boys from his churches have entered the ministry. He expected they would and prayed for it and invited them to consider it. My grandmother said that on the night I was baptized at the age of ten, Brother John prayed that the Lord would call a preacher from among the newly baptized boys. When one of us did decide to enter the ministry he offered every possible encouragement and support.

"He has always given us opportunity to preach in his pulpits and then made it a point to put some money in our hands. He gave an encouraging handshake!

"Not the least important factor in his success was the

fact that he never preached more than thirty minutes, usually about twenty."

Brooks tells this story about John Suttle but does not identify himself with it. On one occasion a college student stopped in to see the pastor before taking the train to school. When he was leaving, Brother Suttle said, "Where is your top coat?" The boy said that he never wore a top coat mainly because he did not have one to wear. In a moment the pastor put his own top coat on the boy and he went out into the January weather fortified against the snow and cold. Not only was he willing to give his coat but his cloak also; to walk not only the first mile but to add the second mile.

Brooks and Suttle are about the same size.

Mrs. John Wacaster of Waco, North Carolina, is a field worker for this state in the Woman's Missionary Union. She has been under the influence of John Suttle almost all her life. When she was a very young woman she knew that she must serve the Lord in some special way. She had only a high school education, but like some of the other members in Suttle's churches, taught herself under his direction.

At Waco she was under his leadership for 21 years. "He created in me a desire to do, to serve, to give, and to go. He lifted new horizons for me and through his vision I was able to see the world and its needs. He showed me how I could have a part in God's world plan.

"Whatever small thing I have been able to accomplish I would give the credit to my pastor who molded me, guided and directed me for twenty years."

Mrs. Wacaster was president of the Associational Woman's Missionary Union, then became a regional leader and finally was called to lead the work over the entire state, which position she has held for many years. Also, she was a member of the Board of Trustees of Gardner-Webb College for fifteen years.

The score of the baseball game in a cow pasture not far

from Beaver Dam Church was going against the home team.

"Let Nolan pitch," said one of the boys. So Nolan Patrick Howington took the ball, shifted the chew of tobacco from his left to the right cheek, clamped down on it, took a squint at the plate and delivered the pitch. In a few moments there were great cheers. He had struck out the batter, then another and another and won the game. Whether in baseball or in the pulpit, Dr. Howington has been striking out batters ever since.

Dr. Howington is a former pastor of the First Baptist Church of Little Rock, Arkansas, and now Professor of Preaching at Southern Baptist Seminary in Louisville, Ky. He was born in Georgia but when the boll weevil forced immigration from Georgia to Carolina shortly before World War I, his parents moved to Cleveland County where Nolan attended Boiling Springs and Lattimore High schools, Gardner-Webb Junior College and Wake Forest College. He then did graduate work at Wake Forest and later took his degree at the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary.

Nolan felt the call to the ministry at the age of six and since that time has been preaching. He went to Little Rock from the South Knoxville Baptist Church after a number of pastorates in North Carolina. He is a member of the Executive Board of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention, a Trustee of Southern Seminary, a Trustee of the East Tennessee Hospital, and a Mason.

"From the practical point of view, John W. Suttle was my 'Father in the Ministry' to whom I owe a debt too great to discharge. For me he was and is an ideal and model and one of the best informed teachers I ever knew. My gratitude for his influence, kindness, fatherly helpfulness, and counsel cannot be expressed in words. I pray God I may perform half as worthily as he did in the active ministry. Though short of stature, he will always cast a long shadow over my life."

About his tobacco chewing baseball manners, Nolan

said, "I didn't feel too bad about chewing tobacco because I knew my pastor took a chew occasionally and I got from Brother Suttle some mighty good ideas about fair play and about playing the game hard whether I won or lost."

Nolan began looking for lost people when he was very young. One of his twin brothers—Hugh, of the twin combination Hugh and Hoyt—became lost late one afternoon and was not found until the next day. This was quite an experience for young Nolan who was around eleven years of age at that time. He walked up and down the fields, looked in the honeysuckle vines, tore his clothes on brambles and briars as they searched all night for the missing twin. More than a hundred neighbors and friends joined in and finally found the little four-year-old shortly after daylight the next morning.

Only a year or two after this experience Nolan responded to the call to preach and even though only in his early teens, often went to the big woods below his home and practiced preaching to the residents of the woods. He gained quite a reputation as a "boy preacher" and was especially honest, sincere, forthright, and convincing in his manner of preaching.

While overseas as a chaplain in the Army, Howington wrote his former pastor, "Every day that I live I am indebted to you, my Father in the Christian Ministry. Whenever I preach, your long shadow falls across my pulpit to bless it and make it more holy. You can never know how much you mean to me nor how much your life and reflections have contributed to my ministry. As Paul once said of his choice Christian friends, 'I thank my God upon every remembrance of you'."

Nolan wrote his pastor again in August of 1954 when Brother John was expecting to end the 65th year of his ministry. He had just helped him in two meetings at Double Springs and Beaver Dam. "You were certainly kind to let me come back and preach in those beloved churches. My preaching was poor enough but I certainly enjoyed the fellowship with you and the people. I wish

I could tell you in words how much you mean to me personally and how much your Christian spirit and your kind heart have blessed and guided me across the years.

"I know these closing weeks of your ministry are not easy. Please do not feel that your work will terminate September 30, 1954, for your influence will live on in the lives of many young preachers and in the lives of those to whom you have ministered across the years. You will continue to be a source of strength and a power for Christ, for you are one of those individuals whom God uses all the days of his life."

While Pastor Suttle and his friends were building the new church at Double Springs in 1920, a little eight-year-old boy was running around from one place to another taking a great deal of interest in all that was going on. He was curious and mischievous and was quite interested in the deep trenches where the foundations were poured, and later investigated the huge furnaces which were being installed to heat the building.

The workmen had left some protruding pieces of metal sticking up out of the floor.

A. V. Washburn, Jr., was in a hurry. He decided to jump over the objects. Instead, he was impaled upon the metal with pieces of it sticking in his legs. Both legs were dangerously cut.

He not only received those scars at Double Springs but he received a number of other very permanent, important, lasting, and valuable impressions about what a country church could be and do; what a rural pastor and superintendent of a Sunday School could be and do, with nothing but people with which to begin. These impressions he has carried along with leg scars to the length and breadth of the Southern Baptist Convention. A. V. Washburn, Jr., at the present time, is Secretary of the Sunday School Department of the Sunday School Board. In this capacity he has gone into thousands of churches and communities in the South stressing better methods of teaching and

training not only in rural churches but in the largest churches in the land.

At the age of nine he was converted and was baptized by Brother John at Double Springs. Later he attended Gardner-Webb Junior College, Wake Forest College, and has done postgraduate work at Southern Seminary, Peabody College, and Southwestern Seminary. For a time he was Associate Secretary in the Young People's Department. Then from 1943 to 1945 he served with the United States Navy. After returning to Nashville, he became Secretary of Teaching and Training, which position he held until his recent promotion. In college he was a campus leader, a member of the College Honor Society, and was graduated magna cum laude. He is author of numerous magazine articles and more recently of one of the Board's study course books entitled, *Young People in the Sunday School*.

A. V.'s interest and ability in Sunday School work was due in no little part to the general climate at Double Springs because there not only Brother Suttle and Jasper Barnette had laid the ground work for good rural Sunday Schools, but his parents, Mr. and Mrs. A. V. Washburn, Sr., had been interested in good Sunday Schools. His father had followed Barnette as superintendent in 1922 and had led the unit on to the Advanced Standard and maintained it for five years.

Mr. Washburn, Sr., then became a Sunday School Missionary in the Haywood Association with Sylva, North Carolina, as headquarters. He later moved to Goldsboro, North Carolina, where he and his wife were active in Goldsboro Baptist Church and where Mrs. Washburn became an approved southwide worker for Sunday School and Extension Work. Both have now retired and live in a new home in their old community.

From the vantage point of a high hill in Palestine, Emmett Willard Hamrick surveyed the scene. Below him to the right and to the left, in front and behind, were

nearly all the scenes which were familiar to Jesus as He walked over those dusty roads nearly 2,000 years ago.

Hamrick was there as a member of the research team of the American School of Oriental Research doing some post-doctoral study and investigation.

He not only looked over the city of Jerusalem which had evoked the tears of Jesus at the garden of Gethsemane, the Sea of Galilee, the little village of Bethany, and the imminence of Calvary; but he also looked over the years back across the Mediterranean and the broad Atlantic, the expanse of the Carolina and back to his little home in Cleveland County where he was born. He looked back to the experiences he had had in the Beaver Dam Community where he had come under the influence of John W. Suttle.

"I could not begin to describe the extent of Mr. Suttle's influence on my life," said Dr. Hamrick. His education began in the church where Suttle was pastor, although his formal training began in a little three teacher school building, later the Lattimore High School. He was a member of Phi Beta Kappa at the University of North Carolina and later took his doctor's degree from Duke University.

Following his formal education he had three years with the United States Army and since that time has been Associate Professor of Religion at Wake Forest College. He is a member of the National Association of Biblical Instructors, a member of the Society of Biblical Literature and Exegesis, as well as a member of the American School of Oriental Research.

In 1943 he was married to Miss Shirley Philbeck, beautiful and talented musician who first learned to play the piano in a Suttle Sunday School.

Joseph Wheeler Costner, a farmer of the Double Shoals Community in Cleveland County, was tired. The day was hot, humidity was high and his pair of mules had been unusually ornery that morning. At forty years of age he did not have the willingness and the strength he had pos-

sessed when he was younger to wrestle with ornery mules.

"Wrestling with mules was the least of my problems that morning. I was wrestling with the Lord," Wheeler told his friends later. "I just didn't see how I could answer the call to preach. I had no education, my family was growing, and I just didn't much believe a church would call me even if I told them the Lord had called me.

"I came in, sat down and turned through the Bible to read a little. I don't know why but my eye fell on the passage in Judges which described how Gideon had put out a fleece to test the Lord. I had read the passage many times and was familiar with the story, but that day I read it over and over again and decided that I, too, would put out a fleece.

"The next day I went to Shelby. I had challenged the Lord that I would accept the call to the ministry if anyone spoke to me about becoming a preacher on that little trip to the county seat. I had no idea it would be mentioned. However, I went into the office of the Shelby Daily Star and was talking to the reporter about a news item for the Kings Mountain Association.

"We talked a little about routine matters and then the reporter happened to mention the untimely passing of the Reverend J. M. DeVenny and the stroke of paralysis suffered by the Reverend D. G. Washburn. Then he looked me square in the face and said, 'Someone will have to take their place. Had it ever occurred to you, Wheeler, that you ought to be preaching the Gospel?' That was enough 'fleece' for me. I went on back to Double Shoals and the following Sunday asked the congregation to license me."

The congregation issued the license and within seven days Wheeler Costner got a call to preach at a small country church called Pisgah at the foot of the Casar Mountains. Costner had been a business man, a teacher, a deacon and Sunday School worker as well as a farmer. He became Associational Sunday School Superintendent under the tutelage of John Suttle. His interest was heightened in Religious Education after a visit to the Kings Mountain

Association by Mr. Gainer Bryan of the Sunday School Department of Georgia.

His record as superintendent of the Kings Mountain Associational Sunday School was enviable. This Association became one of the leading Associations of the entire South in the number of study awards and Standard Sunday Schools.

Costner had had little formal education except high school and business college training, but every chance he had he took ministerial refresher courses at Gardner-Webb, Mars Hill, and Duke University preacher schools. Most of his education, however, came by self-teaching and mastery of the complete set of study course books offered by the Sunday School Board. He has been a member of the General Board of the Baptist State Convention. In 1920 he was married to Miss Cora Lee Canley, and they have four children. A hobby for spare time is the study of photography, for which he has a state license.

Of John Suttle he says, "In him I discovered a pastor who not only was interested in the salvation of lost souls but was interested in his members yielding their lives to complete service for God regardless of the vocation they had chosen.

"His preaching is always expository and extemporaneous, arrayed with the most beautiful and challenging homiletics. He teaches by example; he is courageous in his convictions, gentle in his discipline, and always weeps with those who weep and rejoices with those who rejoice."

When Mr. Costner broke the news of his decision to enter the ministry to his pastor, Brother John said, "Wheeler, I have been waiting for more than two years for you to tell me. I have no questions to ask."

George Leland Royster had left the church at Double Shoals as soon as the service was over. He had a long way to go and a three mile walk on a sand clay road would require over an hour for his bare feet to convey him home.

He did not mean to be a hitchhiker but Pastor John

Suttle picked him up anyway. "I'm going right by your house and riding in a buggy is easier than walking."

Leland looks back upon that three mile buggy ride as the highlight of his Christian experience. As a child he longed for the opportunity to be around John Suttle.

"To me he was the greatest person I ever knew. I looked at him and found him to be so much like the person I knew as Jesus. I thought how fine it was to be a preacher and wondered if some day I might not also preach. His talk that day started me to thinking what I ought to do with my life.

"While I was studying for the ministry I was called upon on one occasion to meet all of Brother Suttle's appointments at New Bethel, Double Shoals and Lawndale. I had to preach five times in one week. Since then I have been convinced that any young minister would appreciate him more if he could make rounds with him or follow in his footsteps."

Royster went on to become a very successful minister in preaching, teaching, Religious Education and music. He is now Minister of Music and Education at the Highland Baptist Church in Hickory, North Carolina. He has been a member of the General Board of the Baptist State Convention, a Lion, and an active leader in other community interests.

It was midnight at the Suttle home in Shelby. The doorbell rang and waked John. He lay still a minute thinking that he had only dreamed the bell rang. The second and third time it rang he got up and went to the door.

"Brother Suttle, I hope you will forgive me for coming to your home at such an hour denying you of the sleep and rest you have earned, but I have a problem on my mind and felt I must talk to you about it."

"Come in and sit down, Olin," said Brother John. And in the early hours of the morning he listened to Charles Olin Greene tell him how he had been impressed to enter the ministry but that he had fought the call and tried to

persuade himself that it was a passing fancy; that even though he had already finished high school he did not have the money to go to college, especially with a wife and child to support.

"If the Lord wants you to preach, he will find a way to take care of you and your family until you can get an education," John told Olin. So another one of his preacher boys went to Wake Forest and since then has been one of the most successful ministers in rural work in North Carolina. C. O. Greene has been marked as a leader since that midnight visit with Brother Suttle. At Pineville he was statistician for the Mecklenburg Association and president of the Ministerial Conference. In Raleigh he was moderator of the Raleigh Association and President of the Region IV Baptist Training Union Conference. In the Kings Mountain Association he has been both vice-moderator and moderator of the Association and president of the Pastor's Conference. He is a member of the General Board and Executive Committee of the North Carolina Baptist State Convention and is chairman of the State Missions Committee. He is chairman of the Fruitland Institute Advisory Committee and a member of other important committees for convention activities.

"When I had this great decision to make for my life, I went to John Suttle because I knew he was a great man. He is great because of his humble faith in God, his belief in the Gospel of Christ as the hope of a lost world, his simple preaching of the Word, his love for people, his uncommon sense, his keen sense of humor, and his spirit of helpfulness. It was his messages that had challenged me and brought inspiration. It was he who married us, who rejoiced with us when our babies came, who sorrowed with us when we walked through the shadows, who ordained me as a deacon, who counselled and prayed with me that stormy night. He has been my friend, supporter, guide, confidant, as well as my Father in the Ministry.

"Of all the many things I can say about Brother John, I believe the thing that stands out about him and his work

is an uncanny ability to see through most problems which arise in a church. Then, to decide what ought to be done and to see it is done in such a way as to further the work of the Kingdom and leave the people happy in doing it.

"And usually he was right!"

The old saying that "A prophet is not without honor save in his own country" is not true in the case of John Jacob Thornburg who is pastor of his native Patterson Grove Baptist Church. He is one of John Suttle's "Sons of the Ministry" who made such a splendid record in high school and college and was so well liked that his home people called him back to be their pastor.

John got a definite call at the age of 22 to do special Christian work then left his job as a shipping clerk in Burlington Mills, got his college degree and has attended several special ministerial schools at Gardner-Webb College since that time. He is continuing Suttle's pattern of building the community around the church.

William Fletcher McGinnis is another Beaver Dam son. He answered the call to the ministry at the age of sixteen and his pastor led the ordination service and later helped him at a revival meeting at High Shoals in Rutherford County where McGinnis has been pastor for a number of years. He is clerk of the Sandy Run Association.

If one examines the rolls of all the churches where John Suttle has been a pastor for as long as five years, there is hardly a church which has not produced ministers, teachers, full time Christian workers and other leaders of unusual caliber. Probably there are hundreds of persons who got their impressions of dedication from him which John will never know about.

Being the leading minister of the Association for forty years put Brother John in the position of being called upon often to associate in the ordination of many young ministers. W. F. Monroe of Grover, North Carolina, re-

calls an incident of interest which happened when he was being questioned before his ordination.

In the presbytery along with Brother Suttle was Dr. W. A. Ayers of Forest City, a very erudite and highly educated minister who was in charge of the questions. He used a wide choice of big words and involved phrases. In one of the questions his manner was so ponderous that young Monroe was confused. "I don't understand, Dr. Ayers," the neophyte timidly stated.

Dr. Ayers turned to Brother Suttle and asked him to explain the query to the young minister. Suttle answered, "I don't know what you are talking about either."

Of course, all the preachers present had a good laugh and the tension was broken for the embarrassed young minister. He went ahead and answered not only that question, but all the others and passed the examination.

XXIII

A Picture Of A Pitcher-Collecting Partner

"SWEETEST STORY EVER TOLD"

*Thy people shall be my people
and thy God my God.*

Ruth 1:16

"Leila, why do you suppose Mollie won't drink?" called John to his wife from the horse trough beside the well at the parsonage at Smithfield one late afternoon in 1907.

"I don't know, John. Maybe she is not thirsty," the young minister's attractive wife called back, afraid for the moment to tell him the real reason.

"I know she is thirsty. We have driven over half of Johnston County since morning and she has not had a drop to drink. And it's hot!" he added.

"It may be," ventured the young wife who decided she had better tell all she knew about the water, "that I put too much salt in the well. Or too much kerosene. I found some wiggletails in it this morning and the neighbors said they always put a little salt in theirs."

"How much did you put?" asked the interested husband.

"I put all of that 100 pound sack, except I left a little for our table," she said.

"And the kerosene?" queried John.

"About a gallon, I suppose."

"Well, no wonder Mollie wouldn't drink. I wouldn't drink either," said John.

No one drank from that well for a long time. The church soon found out the predicament and bored another well on the parsonage lot.

Wiggletails in the water and real malaria mosquito bites were only a part of the troubles and problems of being "a pastor's wife" for 66 years. Leila Pierson Suttle is a many-sided woman as her collection of pitchers, her paintings, her clippings, her needlework, and her cooking will attest; but first of all, she is a homemaker. Her home has been the center of her life whether in a pioneering role in Stanly and Johnston counties or in Shelby, the home town of her husband.

She was quite young to be married at the age of sixteen and young indeed to be left at home for long periods of time with the growing family. Young John tried to get home every night, but in those days of poor transportation, bad roads, and bad weather, this was not possible every time. "Many times I have rocked the children to sleep and then cried myself to sleep waiting in the darkness for John to come home; and I can tell you, I was really scared," she recalls.

In her early years in Atlanta, she never learned not to be afraid of the dark and did not know how to interpret the sounds of the night which hold no fear for the average person in the country.

Almost suddenly as it were, she found herself the wife of a country preacher living on the fringe of a great Carolina wilderness among strange people, using strange customs, and nearly six hundred miles from the warmth of her Georgia family connections.

Bertie Lee was born in Shelby while John was pastor at Blacksburg. Charles Batie was born in Albemarle shortly

Coats of Arms



Suttle

Suttle

Pierson



after the Suttles took that field, and Esther Barbara and Mary Elizabeth were born in Smithfield. All of her babies were born in the home since there were no hospitals available, and while the doctors were excellent in that day and time, they could do little more than a midwife in practicing obstetrics in the home. However, the babies flourished and grew strong and had no serious illnesses except for the usual colds, croup, or sore throat. Mrs. Suttle became quite familiar with all the home remedies of her day and time but she was not as quick to use turpentine, kerosene, or pine tar, as some of her neighbors.

Mrs. Suttle has always been the preacher's helper in the home but not in his rural churches. This is not to say she did not go to church or help with church work. It would have been next to impossible for her to wash and dress the children and carry them with John through a long and busy day when he would preach as many as five times.

Instead, she remained at home and was very active in her home church. "All of my life I have attended Sunday School and preaching service regularly. I can remember when we shined and polished the little shoes on Saturday night and set them aside for Sunday morning. My mother used to send me to her Sunday School (Methodist) in the morning and then to a nearby Presbyterian Sunday School in the afternoon.

"I have been fortunate enough to attend most of the Associational meetings, State Conventions, occasionally the Southern Baptist Convention, and one Baptist World Alliance.

"I have been president of the Woman's Missionary Society of the First Baptist Church of Shelby and was the first president of this organization at Albemarle."

A group known as "Wives of Ministers" was organized in the Suttle home a number of years ago through the efforts of both Mr. Suttle and Mrs. Suttle. On various occasions she has taught Sunday School and sung in the choir. In South Shelby she assisted members in planning

the weddings and arranging decorations for all church affairs, especially floral designs.

One of Mrs. Suttle's greatest interests has been scrap-books. Except for her scrapbooks this book could not have been written. She has taken a great delight in putting every item about the preacher, the people he associates with and the churches he served, into the scrapbook. In addition she made notations about incidents they both wish to remember. Some of these incidents were recorded in outline and others in detail.

For fifty years, Mrs. Suttle's hobby has been collecting pitchers. She now has more than 2,000 pitchers of every conceivable shape and size with an endless but interesting variety. For many years she said she did not realize she was a collector until one day while cleaning out a cabinet she was surprised to find she had nearly one hundred pitchers she had saved.

She then began to think pitchers day and night, for weeks and months and years, and now has perhaps the largest and most valuable private collection of pitchers in the South. Some of these pitchers she has bought but many of them have been given to her by friends who know of her interest in them. "I certainly could not buy many pieces of china or glass on John's salary in the early days."

Not only is she a collector, but she is an authority on pitchers. She has read and studied all the available books on pitchers, especially those edited by Mrs. Ninnie Watson Kamm who was particularly interested in pitchers in patterned glass. Kamm's book tells when most of the leading patterns and styles of glass pitchers were made and usually lists the artist who made them popular. Some of the earlier ones which are authentic representations of glass work in the 1870's are Minerva, Fish Scale, and the One Hundred and One. Jacob's Ladder was made in 1885 and a three-mold pitcher with a prism ball and butler was made just before the turn of the century.

Mrs. Suttle says that her most valuable pitcher is prob-

ably the Twelve Apostles, made in Staffordshire, England, from what is known as salt glaze ware. It was made in the last quarter of the eighteenth century at Castleford, England. Figures of all of the Twelve Apostles are found on the pitcher. Among the most prized of her collection are fourteen copper lustre pitchers all of which are quite old. Mrs. Suttle also has some silver lustre but this, she says, is not so old or so valuable as the copper. Among the collection one can find the names of almost all the countries of the world; every conceivable shape, form and size pitcher, antiques, orientals, weird faces, animals, flowers; some from milk glass, clear glass, amber glass, or earthenware.

Pitchers bearing the likenesses of the presidents of the United States have always been popular. Mrs. Suttle has Theodore Roosevelt, John Garfield, Woodrow Wilson, Calvin Coolidge, Thomas Jefferson, James Monroe, Martin Van Buren, William McKinley, Benjamin Franklin, James K. Polk, William Howard Taft, and George Washington, in the pitcher collection.

One of her most interesting pitchers is an old earthenware cereal pitcher found in Jugtown. It has two mouths and two handles. Mrs. Suttle inquired the reason for these features and the old man who made it told her, "Well, the cream pitcher sat in the middle of the table and the old man and the old woman sat across from each other. By having a mouth on each side, the old man could tilt the pitcher and pour the cream in his coffee and his wife could do the same without moving the pitcher."

Mrs. Suttle has several unusual pitchers including one memorializing the coronation of Edward VII. There is another made from a Japanese shell brought to her during World War II by Bobby Arey. She has pitchers made of wood, of plastic, of lead, and of pewter. One was crocheted from cotton thread.

She has a dozen or so pitchers known as Tobys. These were made by a potter named Toby Philpot of Bennington, Vermont. One highly impressive work of art is a quart size Chinese pitcher which is ornately decorated with

oriental birds and flowers that are painted to harmonize with odd emblems and decorations formed by unusual china patterns.

Not all of the Suttle pitchers are pretty. There is one portraying the ugliest man I have ever seen with a huge head, misshapen face, unsightly teeth, and huge staring eyes. "It isn't very old and I don't know why it was made or why I bought it. I got it at Lake Lure, North Carolina, and I guess the fact that it is so ugly helps me appreciate the other pitchers."

Mrs. Suttle has a Churchill, a Pickwick, a Confucius, the Tavern Keeper, and Village School Master, and Satan himself. One pitcher resembles the pirate Captain Kidd, and a friend from Long Island, New York, sent her a pitcher showing an old woman who looked enough like the old pirate to be his wife. They stand side by side. The smallest pitcher is known as a flea pitcher and came from Peoria, Illinois. It is so small that Mrs. Suttle keeps a ribbon tied to it to keep from losing it.

In addition to pitchers, Mrs. Suttle from time to time has collected dolls and animals. She has a fine Donald Duck, Ferdinand the Bull, and any number of cows, dogs and horses.

One of her most famous Bennington pitchers has a pair of greyhound dogs for handles. She explained that the pitcher was more valuable according to the position of the hounds' head. If the head is stretched far over into the pitcher this Bennington number is sought after by collectors far and wide.

Mrs. Suttle is a family woman. She came from a large family, being the oldest child among the ten children of Andrew Fremont Pierson and Ella Barbara Stringer Pierson. Her brothers and sisters were Fred, Frank, Pauline, Charlie, Horace, Maude, Clifford, Albert, and Beatrice. All except the last child were reared to manhood and womanhood; the boys became successful business and professional men mostly in the South, and the girls married

well and reared large families. All of her brothers and sisters are now dead except Mrs. C. P. Talbot of Atlanta, Georgia, and Mr. H. H. Pierson of Jacksonville, Florida.

Mrs. Suttle's father was of English descent and was born in Dahlonga, Georgia, and later moved to Brunswick and Atlanta. He was a huge man, weighing around 240 pounds. He died in 1934. Mrs. Suttle was born while the family lived at Gainesville, Georgia. She remembers her father saying that Grandfather Pierson originally came to America from Liverpool, England, and came on a ship called "Welcome".

One branch of the Pierson family was Quakers and once lived in Chester, Pennsylvania. All of them are related to Abraham Pierson who was one of the founders of Yale University and whose tombstone has always been one of the points of interest on the Yale Campus. A few years ago a group of prankish boys from Harvard stole the tombstone of Old Man Abraham thinking that to be a good way to even the score with Yale. Since that time a very large and heavy statue has been placed on the Yale Campus which is much too big to be carted away.

Mrs. Suttle says in a humorous way that the first battle of the Revolutionary War was fought by a Pierson in Yadkin County, North Carolina, and points for her authority to a clipping which describes a fight between some man named Pierson and a Tory of Yadkin County several years before organized fighting of the Revolution began. Pierson came out victorious.

Mrs. Suttle knows more about her family from her mother's side. Her Grandfather Stringer was a very wealthy man who dealt in slaves. The Morrises in her family are related to the John C. Calhoun family of South Carolina and also to the renowned Civil War General D. C. Buell.

One of the first grandmothers she knows anything about was Lavenia Layton McVernon who was born in Belfast, Ireland, and died in this country in 1879. Mrs. Suttle has a picture of her great-great-grandmother as well as photo-

graphs of a half dozen other grandmothers. Lavenia married James Morrow who came to America to spend a year with his cousin, John C. Calhoun of South Carolina. He bought a large tract of land and went back to Ireland for his bride. They were lost on the high seas for several weeks and finally landed in Quebec, Canada, where their first child, Emily, was born. Later they came to Georgia where Emily married Daniel M. Stringer of Gainesville.

Great-great-grandmother Lavenia Morrow was a deeply religious woman and had some of the qualities often found in her Irish ancestors which led people to believe she was able to see into the future and foretell events to come. As she gradually succumbed to the infirmities of old age, she showed remarkable calmness and peace. "I am in good hands. I have had a good life and I ask only that the will of God be done." Sometime before she died, she reported that she could see angels hovering above her and she spoke about these beings to members of her family. "I see angels and my dear Redeemer." At the time of her death she was the oldest member of the Gainesville Church.

Even in the selection of her domestic help, Mrs. Suttle still likes to keep things in the family. For the past twenty years her loyal and devoted serving maid has been Quincy Webber. Quincy's husband is Jesse Webber, a grandson of Phil Wilson who in turn married a girl who once was a slave of elder Joseph Suttle. Quincy is cheerful, alert, a good cook, and a delightful companion for both Mr. and Mrs. Suttle. She and her husband are both leaders in their own community church and she takes a great deal of pride in knowing that if she needs advice about church affairs, her employer is well qualified to give it.

In the beginning Mrs. Suttle had no particular philosophy about how to be a preacher's wife, but after sixty-six years it can almost be summed up in a manner similar to that described by Miss Grace Erwin, a novelist who has written several books about preachers and their wives. "A minister's wife should be attractive but not too attractive.

She must be adaptable to changing situations in a changing world.

"The function of a minister's wife is first of all, to be his wife and in this capacity to complement her husband. She must not try to lead him but must stay in the background enough to push him forward and hold him up for appreciation by his congregation.

"A minister's wife and family can never come first. The minister comes first; he is God's man and under God's authority, not his wife's.

"A good wife may many times do her best work by giving a sympathetic ear to the preacher's troubles, being a sounding board for some of his ideas, and when things go wrong to be the escape valve for excess steam, and after he has been deflated, inflate him and help him to rise again."

A great number of rural churches which now call a minister, take it for granted that his wife will enter into church activity with him, will lead the choir, head one of the departments of the Sunday School, become president of the Woman's Missionary Society, assist in organizing all church suppers and the all-day dinners, and when the occasion demands, teach a study course or substitute for the minister at the midweek prayer service.

This was one thing Mrs. Suttle chose not to do. She felt that rearing a family and providing a home for John was the more important of the two choices.

In addition to joining churches, Mrs. Suttle has always taken great delight in joining other organizations which emphasize family, culture, and art. She has at various times been listed in the Social Register published by the Kingsport Press of Kingsport, Tennessee. She is a member of the Daughters of American Revolution, the Daughters of Patriots and Founders of America, the UDC and Colonial Dames of the Seventeenth Century. She is also a member of the Archives Collector's Association of the Carolinas.

If any man ever was in love with a woman, John has been in love with Leila. "A woman who has the patience to live sixty-six years with a man like me ought to have more reward than she can get on this earth. Except for my wife I could never have done even the things I have done and they couldn't have been done as well."

John is sincere and honest in his belief that Mrs. Suttle comes as near as it is humanly possible in achieving the ideal for a woman extolled in Proverbs 31:

Who can find a virtuous woman? for her price is far above rubies.

The heart of her husband doth safely trust in her, so that he shall have no need of spoil.

She will do him good and not evil all the days of her life.

She seeketh wool, and flax, and worketh willingly with her hands.

She is like the merchants' ships; she bringeth her food from afar.

She riseth also while it is yet night, and giveth meat to her household, and a portion to her maidens.

She considereth a field and buyeth it. With the fruit of her hands she planteth a vineyard.

She girdeth her loins with strength and strengtheneth her arms.

She perceiveth that her merchandise is good. Her candle goeth not out by night.

She layeth her hands to the spindle and her hands hold the distaff.

She stretcheth out her hand to the poor; yea, she reacheth forth her hands to the needy.

She is not afraid of the snow for her household, for all her household are clothed with scarlet.

She maketh herself coverings of tapestry. Her clothing is silk and purple.

Her husband is known in the gates, when he sitteth among the elders of the land.

She maketh fine linen and selleth it; and delivereth girdles unto the merchant.

Strength and honour are her clothing, and she shall rejoice in time to come.

She openeth her mouth with wisdom and in her tongue is the law of kindness.

She looketh well to the ways of her household, and eateth not the bread of idleness.



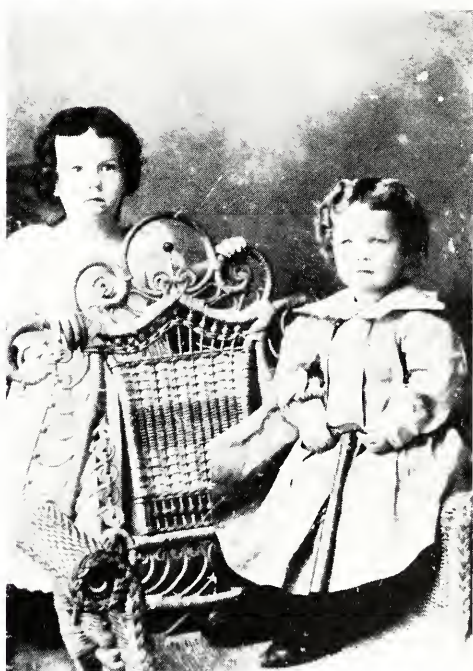
Suttle Ancestral Home



Suttle Home in Shelby, N. C.



*Esther
and
Elizabeth*



*Bertie Lee
and
C. B.*

Her children arise up and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praiseth her.

Many daughters have done virtuously, but thou excellest them all.

Favour is deceitful, and beauty is vain: but a woman that feareth the Lord, she shall be praised.

Give her of the fruit of her hands; and let her own works praise her in the gates.

XXIV

Brother John's Kith And Kin

"BLEST BE THE TIE."

*I will be the God of all the families—
and they shall be my people.*

Jeremiah 31:1

"Send for the doctor, Bate. My time is about up."

Thus spoke gentle Esther Jane Wray Suttle to her husband, Charles Batie Suttle, on a Sunday morning April 7, 1872, a little while before her second son, John William, was born. This important event in the life of Brother John and his parents took place in a house now owned and lived in by Tom McIntyre of the Union Baptist Church Community, Cleveland County, North Carolina.

Spring rains had fallen and corn planted late in March was already bursting through the rich soil. Nearby was the old drill grounds of Camp Call where soldier boys from both Cleveland and Rutherford counties had drilled in preparation for going away to the great war—the Civil War—the War Between the States. John's father had been one of those boys.

In the past 85 years Brother John has had ample time to learn that he was born into a great family with wide con-

nections in both counties, that he is akin to almost everybody who is anybody and "to a lot of other people", he adds with a grin.

The Suttle family originally came from England and took its name from the lands of Suthill in Yorkshire, England. This was a corruption of the word Southill. The Coat of Arms was officially approved in the visitation of Nottinghamshire in 1614 as having been used by Sir Henry Suthill in the reign of Henry VI. The same visitation shows a branch of the family residing at Erringham in Yorkshire represented by John Suthill, a grandson of Sir Henry Suthill.

The first American representative of this family was Isaac Suttle. He came to this country by way of Scotland and was the great-great-great-grandfather of the Reverend John W. Suttle. He was a Revolutionary War patriot from Virginia, who later settled near Rutherfordton in a community near Broad River. Isaac's son, George, was born at Floyd's Creek in an old brick house built by his father in 1798 to 1800.

George Suttle was one of the leading citizens of Rutherford County at the beginning of the 19th century and for many years took a leading part in the religious, social, and economic life of that county. He built a house in Sulfur Springs Township which was considered one of the most magnificent structures in the county. It is now one of the oldest houses standing in the county. George died in 1816.

His son, Benjamin, married Nancy Baxter and they were the parents of Joseph Suttle, along with fourteen other children. Joseph was the grandfather of the hero of this story, John Suttle.

Nancy Baxter's marriage into the Suttle family tied together two of the most productive families of Western North Carolina. The descendants of William Baxter, who came from Ireland to America in 1783, have multiplied into the thousands and have given Piedmont North Carolina many of its leading citizens and public servants. His

descendants now have spread to almost every state in the Union, but a little study of genealogy shows them to continue to be leaders in all phases of life.

William Baxter landed in Charleston, South Carolina, in 1783 and soon afterwards gravitated to Rutherford County where he married Miss Sarah Berryhill of Mecklenburg County. They built a log cabin not far distant from the rushing waters of Broad River High Shoals and settled down to the honorable job of tilling the soil and rearing a large family. In 1812, Sarah died, and he was married a second time to Miss Katherine Lee of the old Virginia stock of which a great southerner, Robert E. Lee, was a branch. From this marriage came a large part of his family and the intelligence for which the Baxter family became famous.

William was the father of twenty children, and became the owner of many thousands of acres of land in the southern part of Rutherford County including the tracts upon which the towns of Henrietta and Caroleen now stand. He died on October 12, 1853, at the age of 93.

In addition to Baxters, many families including his lineage, are the Durhams, Suttles, Harrills, Carpenters, Griffins, Blantons, Haynes, and many others. Some of them have become famous as lawyers, doctors, ministers, judges, and governors.

Elisha Baxter was twice governor of Arkansas; first, nominated and elected by the Republicans and second, nominated and elected by the Democrats. His explanation was, "I did not please my first constituents because I would not help loot the state treasury. I got the second nomination and election because I agreed to continue this policy." He said his campaign slogan was, "I believe a man ought to be reasonably honest."

Esther McDowell Baxter, daughter of William, married Micajah Durham, a pioneer Rutherford County educator and soldier. Micajah Durham was a man much ahead of his times. He was a great believer in travel as a means of broadening one's education. He rode a horse to New York

City on one occasion to hear Jenny Lind, the Swedish nightingale, sing. He also traveled on horseback to the Mammoth Cave in Kentucky, to Florida, and other distant points of the country. He represented Rutherford County in the State Convention of 1861.

It is said that he made the first secession speech on the steps of the Capitol of the State of North Carolina. He was a volunteer in the War Between the States and lost his life in the Battle of the Wilderness May 6, 1864. He was a cousin of Jefferson Davis, to whom it is said he bore a striking resemblance.

Among the best known children of Micajah Durham is the late Plato Durham who practiced law in Shelby and was a captain in the Civil War. He and his men were credited with firing the last shots at Appomatox. He represented Cleveland County in the legislature of 1866 and also in 1868, and was a leading figure in the Constitutional Convention of 1868 and 1875. Captain Durham was editor of the Shelby Banner and was always an ardent worker for any cause or movement which was beneficial to North Carolina and his native people. He was instrumental in gaining many pardons for members of the Ku Klux Klan. He died November 9, 1875.

His brother, Columbus Durham, prior to his death a few years ago, was one of the state's most prominent Baptist ministers.

George Suttle, John's great-great-grandfather, purchased three tracts of land in Rutherford County totaling approximately 614 acres. Much of this was in cultivation and while in his possession, he cleared more of it and planted it. At one time he owned approximately 50 slaves which necessitated a large area of land in cultivation to maintain them.

The fine house he built is now known as the Carpenter house, having been inherited by one of his daughters who married Tennessee Carpenter. His will, found in the ap-

pendix of this book, gives an interesting insight into the life and times of early colonial days.

George was survived by the following children: William B. Suttle, Joseph Suttle, Benjamin F. Suttle, Elizabeth Suttle, George W. Suttle, John B. Suttle, Sarah Suttle, Susan Suttle, and Nancy Suttle.

Elizabeth, the oldest daughter, married William Lewis Griffin in 1820. He was Register of Deeds for eighteen years and was taken from office by the Reconstruction Acts of 1868. Other daughters and granddaughters married Camps, Kelleys, Baxters, Harrills, Blands, Bostics, Fortunes, and Carpenters.

Elder Joseph Suttle was born in 1827 and died in 1861. His home place was about four and one-half miles southwest of Shelby. He was pastor of the Double Springs Baptist Church of which Brother John was later to serve as pastor for 37 years. He was present at this church when the Kings Mountain Association was organized in 1851 and was pastor of the New Bethel Church from 1857 to 1859, for which he was paid the munificent sum of \$49.21 for his services.

Elder Suttle was pastor of many other churches in this section and was one of the leading proponents of the idea so common to Missionary Baptists. He believed in Missions as opposed to the Anti-mission ideas of the so-called Hard-shell or Primitive Baptists. In 1855, he delivered a "classic" Missionary sermon to the Association, which was the annual letter. (See Appendix.)

He was married in 1846 to Miss Elvira Blanton who had been born in 1828 and died in 1911. She was a daughter of Charles Blanton, the first sheriff of Cleveland County, and a sister of Burwell Blanton who became the father of "Uncle" Charlie Blanton and George Blanton, prominent Shelby bankers. To this union was born Charles Batie Suttle, Sara Suttle, Esther Suttle, and A. B. Suttle. Sara married George Washington Wray; Esther married Dr. Victor McBrayer. A. B. Suttle married Miss Lou Miller.

Charles Batie Suttle was born in 1846 and died in 1927. He was married on August 8, 1869 to Esther Jane Wray, who was born in 1851 and died in 1932.

An interesting story in connection with the ownership of slaves by Elder Joseph Suttle was that on his farm he had a free born Negro named Andy Johnson. Andy fell in love with a slave girl belonging to J. A. L. Wray and wanted to marry her. Mr. Wray refused. Finally Andy persuaded Elder Joseph Suttle to buy her. Mr. Suttle agreed to do so if Andy would repay him by working for him seven years. The minister paid the sum of \$1,100 for the slave girl.

As the Civil War broke out, Elder Joseph became very ill. He called Andy to his bedside and asked him to promise that no matter what course events took at the close of the war, he would fulfill the terms of their contract. Andy promised to do so. Although the minister died in the spring of 1861, Andy Johnson remained faithful to his mistress for several years following the war and the Emancipation Proclamation.

Andy Johnson was a preacher like his benefactor. He studied the Bible diligently and was able to preach powerful sermons, swinging his long arms and impressing the congregation with his tall, gaunt six-foot-four frame. Several of his sons, grandsons, and great-grandsons became ministers and at least four or five of these very tall Johnson boys are well known itinerant colored preachers in Cleveland County.

The will of Elder Joseph Suttle is interesting and is recorded in the appendix of this book.

A. B. Suttle, known as Ab Suttle, was the only brother of Charles Batie, being Brother John's only uncle on his father's side. He was sheriff of Cleveland County for two terms. Physically he was more like the Blantons, large of stature, with a dominant type of personality, and a very good sheriff. He was sheriff at the time Shelby's chief of police, Ed Hamrick, was killed by a Negro. He was shot at during the fracas.

After Elder Joseph Suttle died, his widow, Elvira Blanton Suttle, moved to Shelby and occupied a house built by George Wray. She was known as one of Shelby's saintliest and most highly esteemed ladies. The house she lived in was one of Shelby's finest residences at that time. It had double front doors, artistic banisters, gracious porches on a street lined with massive oaks, linden trees with their heart shaped leaves, and flanked on either side by stately elms. Mrs. Suttle spent her declining years with her youngest daughter, Esther, who was the wife of Dr. Victor McBrayer. They were the parents of Mrs. Paul Webb, Mrs. Otis Mull, Mrs. Penry Owens, and Willie McBrayer.

Brother John's parents, Charles and Esther Jane, were married at Double Springs where Grandfather Suttle had been pastor. They rode from Shelby to Double Springs on horseback, got married, and then went to church service. "Going back home was their honeymoon," says John.

On their 50th wedding anniversary their son, John, took them back to Double Springs as a part of the celebration of that occasion.

Bate Suttle was known for many years as Shelby's "model man". Born December 22, 1846, he became a member of Captain Jim Wells' volunteers for late service in the Civil War. He saw action and several skirmishes with the Yankees in Eastern North Carolina.

When the Civil War closed he was in the Greensboro area and was informed by Captain Wells of the surrender of General Lee at Appomattox. The boys were given the privilege of throwing down their arms and getting home the best way they could or of waiting to be paroled. Bate threw down his arms and walked the 180 miles from Greensboro to Shelby, most of the time barefooted and with his clothes in tatters.

All the members of his family were eager to greet him, but he motioned them to wait until after he had had a bath at the spring house and put on a new suit of clothes that his mother had made for him. His future wife, Esther

Jane Wray, was the first to see him arrive at his own home. She threw her arms around him and gave him a soldier's welcome.

Bate was a tall, thin, ascetic looking man, but no weakling. He took personal family pride in the fact that he never used tobacco in any form, never took a drink of alcohol, did not even taste Coca-Cola, or cold drinks and was never known to take an oath or use a swear word. In his youth his hair was red but it turned from gray to white as he approached fourscore years.

Death came one day in the barber shop where he was about to have some tonsorial work done, although apparently he had been enjoying good health.

He was reputed to be one of the hardest working men in Shelby, getting up around four o'clock in the morning and working until bedtime. His idea of rest was a change of occupation. If the boys about him got tired from plowing or hoeing he would say, "Well, while we rest let's shuck corn for awhile."

He joined the church at Double Springs at the age of nine and was baptized by his father, Elder Joseph Suttle. He was a faithful member there but because of his retiring ways was not an active leader in church affairs. However, after moving to Shelby he became a deacon in the First Baptist Church where he was a member for 44 years.

Bate was a farmer until the year 1884, after which he moved to Shelby and went into the livery stable business with G. W. Wray. They bought and sold mules and horses, rented animals and vehicles for hire. Later he had a grocery and meat business with Marion Putnam and from that went into the operation of the first ice plant in the city of Shelby.

Numerous glowing tributes were paid to his life and character by ministers, fellow townsmen, and newspapers.

The way Bate Suttle and Esther Jane Wray met, courted, and married each other was no accident. It might have been a sort of planned accident.

Elder Joe Suttle and J. A. L. Wray lived on adjoining

farms. Each one owned about 500 acres of rich land on the west side of Broad River. On Sunday afternoons Batie would take his sister, Sara Suttle, for a horseback ride. At the same time, George Wray would take his sister, Esther Jane, for a buggy ride. They would meet "accidentally" at the place planned by the boys beforehand and swap sisters. Things began to happen and they went around together a little more and a little more. Finally Bate married Esther and George married Sara and both reared large families.

Mrs. Suttle, mother of John, was a small boned, slender, good looking brunette with brown eyes, dark hair, and a lovely complexion. She was the daughter of James Alexander Linton Wray, the second daughter and third child. An older sister, Priscilla Wray, married James Toms of Rutherford County, who in turn had a daughter who later married the late John R. Dover of Shelby, mother of Charles and Jack, the textile industrialists, and other Dovers.

In early life, Mrs. Suttle learned to spin and weave cloth and run the reel for winding the thread. One of her special jobs was to prepare tallow and later tallow and beeswax and mold them into eight inch candles. She had a mold with which she could prepare six to eight candles at a time. She was energetic and full of life, had a keen sense of humor, and was an almost untiring worker. She had two other sisters and six brothers.

After her marriage to Bate Suttle they bought a farm and moved about ten miles northwest of Shelby into the Union Community. There was no church building there then, but people would come from the surrounding community and spend the week camping. Once in 1871, Esther and Batie kept 26 people overnight. Their house was small and they cooked on the open fireplace and slept on pallets, but since they had plenty of quilts it was no problem to make a nice bed on the floor and the young folks did not mind it at all. In fact, they had a grand time with the boys in one room and the girls in another.

The following morning all of the guests would arise early and help the young couple to prepare breakfast, fold up their beds and be off to the Camp Ground in time for a few visits with other friends before the preaching hour. They would have their dinner on long tables constructed around the "church" arbor.

In 1873, Bate and Esther moved back to the Sharon Community where he bought a farm near his mother's home place. He built a one room schoolhouse on the place and employed a governess for his family and the children of a few neighbors. John attended Sharon Public School and two sessions at the Blanton school. These schools were taught by the late R. L. Ryburn, well known Shelby attorney.

Bate and Esther became the parents of seven children: Joe L. Suttle, Secretary-Treasurer of the Cleveland Building and Loan Association; the Reverend John W. Suttle; Julius A. Suttle, druggist; Mrs. S. A. McMurry, wife of Mayor Sim McMurry; Mrs. Lander F. McBrayer; Mrs. L. P. Holland; and Mrs. Lewis Baley, all of Shelby.

Upon her death at the age of 81, Esther Jane was lauded as the model wife of the model man and fit person to be the mother of seven very fine children. She was widely loved by family and friends. Even after the snows of many winters whitened her hair, she enjoyed the companionship of young people and delighted in the gathering of her children and grandchildren.

Mrs. Suttle's father, J. A. L. Wray, was the son of William Wray. William was a native of Georgia who was born January 7, 1805. He had another son, David W. Wray, born July 5, 1826, who was one of the first pastors of Double Springs. A large family connection still exists in the Carolinas and Georgia.

After Bate moved to Sharon he built a house which is now known as the Wesson house. While building the house, he lived at the home of his father, Elder Joe Suttle, which is the original Suttle homestead in Cleveland

County. This grand old colonial mansion is now owned by J. L. Suttle, Jr., of Shelby.

Little John got to live in a number of houses while he was very young. In 1884, the family moved to Shelby on West Marion Street and occupied a house known as the Elvira Blanton Suttle building which had been built by George Wray. Sometime later the Bate Suttles bought and moved to the Arthur Wray house. After this they went to the grandfather Wray home, known in Shelby as the S. A. McMurry home on West Marion Street, in order to take care of Mrs. Suttle's mother and father in their old age. Here the Suttles lived until John was old enough to go away to school.

After marriage, Brother John also lived in other places in Shelby. When he came to be pastor of the Second Baptist Church he lived in a house on South LaFayette Street not very far from the church, across the railroad. A little later they moved to a small house closer to town on LaFayette Street, the lot now being occupied by a gasoline company. In Lawndale, he lived in the old Major Schenck house for eighteen months. From Lawndale he moved back to Shelby and occupied the Wilkins home on West Marion and a little later moved to a home on Grover Street in a house which stands on the present location of the Shelby Hospital.

Most of his Shelby years have been spent in a home on North Washington Street at the intersection of North Washington and Sumter. It was at this location that he developed the hobby of raising chickens and keeping the fowls at the back of the house in a lot and hen houses constructed for that purpose. A few years ago he sold this property and moved to 708 West Marion, which home he still occupies and says that this is definitely his last move until he goes on to Glory.

Brother John's brothers and sisters married well and all have been influential people in the life of Shelby. His older brother, Joe L. Suttle, married Miss Mae Walker, a city music teacher in 1903, who at the same time was organist

at the First Baptist Church. Mrs. Suttle died in 1916. Joe died in 1943 after a long career as a busy financier, churchman, and real estate investor. He was vice-president of the Union Trust Company for many years and at the same time was Secretary-Treasurer and Director of the Cleveland Building and Loan Association. He had several terms on the city council and finally became mayor of Shelby.

Mary Irene Suttle married S. A. McMurry who later became mayor of the city. Louise Wray Suttle married Lewis Baley, a business man. Julius Albert Suttle married Ethel Lineberger. Julius was a pharmacist and established one of the leading drug stores in Shelby. Dovie Elizabeth Suttle married Lander McBrayer, a business man; and Ola Suttle married L. P. Holland, also a Shelby business man.

On March 29, 1893, John William Suttle was married to Miss Leila Bertie Lee Pierson, daughter of Andrew Fremont Pierson and Ella Barbara Pierson of Atlanta, Georgia. The Piersons at that time were living at Blacksburg, South Carolina, where Mr. Pierson was conductor on the Southern Railroad.

To this union was born Bertie Lee, Charles Batie, Esther Barbara, and Mary Elizabeth Suttle.

Bertie Lee was born December 31, 1893 in Shelby while John was still pastor at Blacksburg. Mrs. Suttle came home to be with the elder Suttles for the new arrival. Bertie Lee graduated from the Presbyterian grammar school at Marshall, North Carolina, where she also won a recitation medal. Upon moving to Shelby she was elected president of the Shelby High School graduating class. She attended Oxford College and also the New York School of Music and Arts. She later studied at the Julliard School of Music in Hartford, Connecticut. She taught the first grade in the South Shelby School for a number of years and for many years was organist at South Shelby and was organist and choir director at the First Baptist Church.

Bertie Lee became the first president of the Ishpening

Literary Club of Shelby and was the first secretary of the Shelby Music Club.

She was married on June 28, 1919 to Joe Turner Cabiness, M.D., in Charlotte, North Carolina. The wedding was performed by one of her father's closest friends, Dr. L. R. Pruitt. They moved shortly thereafter to Hartford, Connecticut, where Dr. Cabiness was connected with a large insurance company.

For many years in Hartford, Bertie Lee has had a leading role in music, Sunday School, church organizations, study clubs, Daughters of the American Revolution, Garden Club, League of Women Voters, and other organizations.

A student of fine arts, she has developed considerable talent as a portrait artist and has done portraits for her father and mother and a number of the leading residents of Hartford. Her hobby is the collection of old silver.

Bertie Lee went with her parents on their odyssey to Stanly and Johnston counties and often went to some of the smaller rural churches for the services. She has never been able to understand how the senior deacon who reported her not bowing her head during the prayer could see her head if his own head was bowed.

Her husband, Joseph Turner Cabiness, was born in Shelby on November 12, 1889. He attended the Shelby graded school and later went to Wake Forest College where he received the B.A., M.A., and B.S. degrees and was graduated cum laude. He later graduated from Physicians and Surgeons college in New York and interned at the Orange Memorial Hospital. He served as a doctor overseas in World War I. After his marriage to Bertie Lee in 1919, they moved to Hartford, Connecticut, where he became Assistant Medical Director of Travelers Insurance Company. In Hartford, he has been a member of the Asylum Avenue Baptist Church, the Hartford Medical Society, Rotary Club of which he was president in 1942-43 and attended all the meetings of that club for a period of 25 years without missing a single session. He is also a mem-

ber of the Windsor Men's Club, the Farmington Country Club, and the University Club. His hobbies are social service, collecting copper lustre and remodeling old colonial houses.

In semi-retirement he and his wife spend part of their time in Shelby and part of their time in New England.

Dr. and Mrs. Cabiness have one son, Joseph Turner Cabiness, Jr., born October 19, 1925 at Hartford, Connecticut. Another son died in infancy. Joe is a business man in Hartford, Connecticut, having finished Wilbraham Academy and Wake Forest College. He is also a veteran of World War II.

In October 1938, Mrs. Cabiness was cited by the Windsor Herald for her efforts in seeking to restore the town of Windsor to its original beauty after severe destruction by a hurricane a few days earlier. Mrs. Cabiness' suggestion was the widespread planting of evergreen vines to take the place of the glorious elms and maples which had been flattened by the hurricane.

A Christmas experience will linger long in the mind of Bertie Lee. When she was a little girl, she was impressed by the fact that her parents on Christmas Eve had brought in some straw and feed and placed it near their stockings and told them on Christmas morning, "Santa Claus stayed here long enough last night to feed his reindeer. See the feed and straw." After she had married and moved away, she and her husband repeated the same incident for her child and some of the neighbors' children and got the same results: a glorious renewal of faith in Santa Claus and the wonderful mystery of Christmas.

While visiting his grandfather a few years ago, Joe Jr. and his cousin Bill Erwin put on a benefit circus and costume ball and gave the proceeds, 14 cents in all, to one of his mother's favorite charities.

Charles Batie Suttle, John's second child and only son, was born July 25, 1895, while the family was in Albemarle. He grew up in Shelby and attended school there.

He entered service for World War I on August 4, 1918, and was honorably discharged on December 24, 1918, for disability. He was private first class of a medical detachment at the base hospital at Camp Wadsworth, South Carolina.

On his return to Shelby from service, he married Miss Mildred Hamrick but this couple was separated a few years later with no children. On November 9, 1940, he married Miss Ruby DeYoung at Greenville, South Carolina. His present residence is Spartanburg, South Carolina, where he has been a member of the Baptist Church, President of the Young Men's Bible Class and a member of the American Legion Post. His wife, Ruby, is very prominent in church work. They have two children: a daughter, Diane, born August 8, 1943; and a son, Michael Batie, born September 14, 1945.

Unfortunately for a number of years he was estranged from his father and this fact deeply grieved his parents. The separation was about a matter which neither father nor son discussed even among members of the family. However, this breach apparently has been healed and C. B. now visits often in the home and quite often may be seen driving his parents out to one of the rural churches for a visit. He squires them both courteously and carefully and shows a personality which is definitely "Suttle and Pierson all the way".

Esther Barbara Suttle, John's third child and second daughter, was born June 10, 1898, at Smithfield, North Carolina. She was graduated from the Shelby High School in 1919 and attended Coker College during 1920-21 where she specialized in Home Economics. On returning home, she became a member of the Shelby Book Club, United Daughters of Confederacy and the Daughters of the American Revolution and did extensive Red Cross work during World War I. She also continued Red Cross work during World War II. She has been a director of Gray Lodge in Hartford, Connecticut. She is a member of the Baptist Church.



DIANNE AND MICHAEL



W. J. ERWIN, JR.



JOE T. CABANISS, JR.



*Mother and Daughters When
Dresses Were Longer*

(Left to right) Mrs. D. R. Sibley, Mrs.
Suttle, Mrs. W. J. Erwin, Sr., and Mrs.
J. T. Cabaniss.



*C. B. Suttle When Collars
Were Higher*



Father
CHARLES BATIE SUTTLE



Mother
ESTHER JANE WRAY SUTTLE

On November 1, 1922, Esther Barbara married Dudley Richardson Sibley of Hartford, Connecticut, at a wedding in her parents' home in Shelby. They have no children.

D. R. Sibley was born December 18, 1894, in Providence, Rhode Island. He was educated in schools there and later attended the Wilbraham Academy at Wilbraham, Massachusetts, and then graduated from Brown University at Providence, Rhode Island. He is a veteran of World War I, having joined the Army in 1918 as a buck private. Later he was stationed at Fort Slocum, New York; Camp Hancock, Georgia; Camp Dix, New Jersey; and was honorably discharged in May, 1919.

He has had a brilliant and outstanding career in the insurance business. He became marine underwriter with the Automobile Insurance Company in 1920, and in 1923, was manager of the Inland Marine Department. Since that time he has worked his way upward in the insurance business and is at the present time head of the Automobile Insurance Company and the Standard Fire Insurance Company of Hartford, Connecticut. He is a member of several clubs in Hartford and has been an active member of the Baptist Church in that city. He is a deacon. His hobby is collecting valuable glass. D. R. has been quite active in local Republican politics in Hartford since 1936.

Mary Elizabeth, youngest of the Suttle daughters, was born February 6, 1902, at Smithfield, North Carolina. She was graduated from the Shelby High School as poet of the class and later attended Coker College at Hartsville, South Carolina. During World War I she did Red Cross work and later was head of the blood plasma unit at Ware Shoals, South Carolina. She has been quite active in the Baptist Church.

On January 18, 1930, she was married to William James Erwin of Pineville, North Carolina. The wedding was performed by her father, assisted by Dr. Zeno Wall. Mary Elizabeth is also a member of the United Daughters of the Confederacy, Colonial Dames of XVII Century,

Daughters of Patriots and Founders of America, Daughters of the American Revolution, and her specialty with the arts is the church organ. She is a charter member of the Contemporary Book Club of Shelby, of which she was the first vice-president. Mary Elizabeth takes an active part in Red Cross work in Danville.

In 1932, twin sons were born to Mr. and Mrs. Erwin, who had moved to Great Falls, South Carolina. Only one of the sons survived and he was named William James Erwin, Jr.

At the age of five, Junior wrote Santa Claus a letter which Grandmother Suttle keeps and treasures very highly. The letter follows:

Dear Santa: I want a carpet sweeper, mop, and broom, a side car, a chest of tools, a tricycle and trailer, a large dump truck.

A bear on rollers, car with lights and breaks, and I want it to be streamlined. A baby carriage and a large doll, and a bed for the doll. A large elephant, a large dog, a monkey, stove, electric iron. A bear with red legs with a black body and a brown head.

Love,
Billy Joe

P.S. You will find me in Shelby and you might bring me a saxophone and airplane.

From composing letters to Santa Claus, Billy Joe has graduated to composing music, at which he is quite an expert. He also studies voice, sings well, collects stamps, and is an artist with a brush and easel. He became an Eagle Scout before going to McCallie School for Boys, where he was graduated. He has just completed a career in the armed forces in Korea. His hobby is music and journalism. Billy Joe is now in school at Chapel Hill, N. C.

William James Erwin, husband of Mary Elizabeth, was born on November 18, 1900, in Pineville, North Carolina. He was the son of Mr. and Mrs. Robert M. Erwin. His father was a merchant who died when William was only two years old. The family then moved to Fort Mill, South Carolina, when he was four. There he attended grammar

school and high school, and was graduated in 1916 at the age of fifteen years. He was graduated from Clemson College in 1921 with a B.S. degree in textiles. He went to work immediately for Consolidated Textile Corporation in Lynchburg, Virginia, and was made assistant superintendent in 1923. He was transferred to Shelby in 1927 as manager of the Ella Division of Consolidated. It was at this time he met Elizabeth Suttle and married her in 1930. In 1929, he became president of Republic Cotton Mills then moved up in important textile circles to be a high official with the J. P. Stevens Company, then with Reigel Textile Corporation, and at the present time is President and Treasurer of the Dan River Mills, Inc., of Danville, Virginia. This mill is known as the largest cotton mill in the world. He is a member and elder of the Presbyterian Church and always takes time to teach a Bible class and be active in Boy Scout work. He is a lieutenant in the Reserve Corps of the Army and also a Rotarian. His hobby is music.

These, then, are the immediate forebears and descendants of John and Leila Suttle. Members of the Suttle family have always been close to each other and they pride themselves on being what Edgar Guest called a "stick together family". At Christmas, Easter, vacation time or other holiday seasons, all the members of the family like to get together, so they have organized a Suttle Clan to meet once a year.

XXV

"This I Believe"

"ALL HAIL THE POWER"

*His eyes were on heaven;
The book was in his hand;
His back was to the world;
His feet were on the ground;
Truth was always on his lips.*

—JOHN BUNYAN

After preaching approximately 32,000 sermons in three-score and five years, Brother John thinks he knows the ingredients of a good sermon and how long it should take to preach it.

Several trunks full of sermon outlines with notes, suggestions, illustrations, stories, and other sermon helps, are stacked away in the library, a number of closets, and the attic of the Suttle home.

"My sermons have always been *expository* instead of *topical*," said Brother John. "I have tried to keep up with current events of the day and keep in touch with all of the happenings to my members, but when it came to preaching I tried to stick close to the Bible and especially close to explaining and expounding the two great general topics of Evangelism and Stewardship. I guess of all of the sermons I have preached, more than half of them have been on these two general subjects.

"I suppose I have preached sermons from every book in the Bible, every chapter in each book, and almost all of the verses. I find it is no trouble to get a sermon from anything, if it is in God's Word."

John's theology comes directly from the Bible itself and he makes no apology for his belief of the Bible from Genesis to Revelation, from cover to cover.

His ability to preach, his choice of subject matter, and how to preach, probably were influenced more by the late Dr. John A. Broadus of Southern Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky, than by any other one man. Two incidents which occurred while he was a student in Louisville have impressed John throughout the years.

As one of the requirements at the Seminary, all of the students had to preach a fifteen minute sermon to the rest of the class, with Dr. Broadus listening. Brother John chose for his sermon a passage from the fifth chapter of Mark about the man who had been possessed of demons. He related how Jesus had cured the man, cast the demons out, and how the man was made well. He went on with the story, finally finished his sermon, and sat down.

"Brother Suttle," said Dr. Broadus. "One thing about that sermon is that you left the poor demon in hell. You did not preach a sermon that led him to Christ. Always lead a man to Jesus who is his Saviour."

Another student was preaching his fifteen minute sermon to the class and Dr. Broadus, and had for his subject the case of a woman who had lost her family. Being a rich society woman, she had purchased a poodle dog which she took with her to all the parties or wherever she went in the search of happiness. She had abandoned the idea of helping children or of donating to orphanages, but clung to the idea of taking care of the dog. When he got through, he looked at Dr. Broadus for approval. Dr. Broadus merely shrugged his shoulders and as he walked out of the room said, "My boy, you will never make a preacher of the gospel if you preach more poodle dog than you do Jesus."

On another occasion while Suttle was a very young preacher, one of the old country preachers from the foot-hills was in a meeting and had asked John to say a few words. John was timid and young and a little reluctant to say anything. The old timer patted him on the back and said, "If you don't know what to say, just brag on Jesus for about fifteen minutes. That'll be sermon enough for my people."

John has not made it a habit to preach the same sermon over and over again and of the many thousand appearances he has made, he has tried to have a "new" topic and sermon for his people. However, there is one sermon topic taken from John 3:36 which he has preached more times than any other. This verse of Scripture is, "He that believeth on the Son hath eternal life," with the emphasis on "hath".

"The Book did not say *was* or *can* or *will* or *maybe*, but states definitely and positively that for him who believes he *hath* eternal life already. The Christian religion is a present tense religion. This quality makes it very valuable in home life, church life, and in so doing, very clearly outlines the whole duty of the Christian."

One of the other great texts which Mr. Suttle has repeated from time to time, especially in revival services, comes from Deuteronomy 33:27 and says, "The Eternal God is thy refuge and underneath are the everlasting arms." "There is so much sin, sorrow, unhappiness, degradation, squalor and remorse in the world that someone must tell people that God is love, that He understands, that He sent a Son, and that He is always present; that His arms are underneath to bear up and to keep us, and that they are everlasting arms," he says.

"The Wisdom of Winners" is the sermon topic he used twice at Double Springs, having preached it first when he came to the church in 1918 and the second time when he resigned his pastorate in 1954. This text is from Proverbs 11:30.

As a rule, John does not use catch phrases to entice his people or to make them think they are going to get something unusual. However, a few titles he has used sound a little catchy such as, "How to be a Grasshopper" from Numbers 13:33. Also, a favorite of the older days was "Gospel Bells" in which he rang a bell and made the music resound over the congregation.

Still another was, "Sugar Sticks" and another "I Saw an Angel in the Sun". One of his very best sermons was from a title suggested by the Reverend J. L. Jenkins, called "A Dead-Broke Preacher". On several occasions he sermonized on "We would see Jesus" which was made famous all over the world by Dr. George W. Truett in 1910.

Dr. Phil Elliott, President of Gardner-Webb College, said he was impressed by the fact that Suttle's sermons were always on great themes of faith, love, social responsibility, being my brother's keeper, and great stories like the parables. "His philosophy was that we fight evil by proclaiming righteousness, both in words and in personal life. He made the impression upon me that he would rather feed eagles than to kill snakes."

He admits that some of his friends, and other people who are not his friends, think he is extreme in his preaching and teaching of stewardship. He has been known for many years as the "Money raisingest Preacher" in the entire Association. He likes to tell the story about himself when a few years ago he was in a church talking about stewardship and kept hammering on the idea of people giving more.

Finally, one of the deacons approached him and said, "Brother John, you talk so much about money a few of our people don't like you."

Brother Suttle replied, "Well, let me tell you right here and now. I have been at this church only three months and find so many of our members so cold and uncooperative, unresponsive, unchristian, and unwilling to give of their time and money to the Lord's work that to be honest

with you, I don't like you and I don't believe the Lord does either."

The deacon turned away without another word but Mr. Suttle said that he noted with a great deal of interest that this particular deacon began to give \$10 more each month than he had ever given before.

Abraham has a strong appeal for Mr. Suttle. For the main reasons, that he was a man of faith and followed God's call even when he did not know where he was going. David is another of his favorites, and the Psalms are his favorite sources of reading and taking verses for texts. He thinks it is a good thing for a Christian both to confess his sins and praise the Lord. These are the two features in David's life which made him "a man after God's own heart".

In the New Testament the Beatitudes have been the source of many of his favorite texts, along with the Sermon on the Mount. Aside from Jesus in the New Testament, Peter is his favorite character. Perhaps John, the beloved disciple, is next and the Apostle Paul third.

He is definitely certain that the center of all creation, of all time, of all things, of all men, has been Jesus Christ of Nazareth.

His favorite parables are of the Good Samaritan, the Lost Coin, the Lost Sheep, and the Lost Prodigal Son.

His text for the first sermon he preached over 65 years ago was from Romans, "For the Wages of Sin is Death".

His favorite miracle is the restoration of sight to the blind by Jesus, followed closely by the story of the ten lepers of which only one came back to say, "Thank you," and Jesus asked the question, "Where are the nine?"

The two favorite books of the New Testament are Matthew and John, although he has taken many texts from Acts.

"I have been a man of action. I like action among church members, and naturally one would think I would be interested in the actions of the first Christians. I like



Birthday, age 82, at Double Springs. Suttles with two daughters, Elizabeth and Bertie Lee, and Dr. J. T. Cabaniss in back row.



*Mr. and Mrs. W. J. Erwin
of Danville, Va.*



*Mr. and Mrs. D. R. Sibley
of Hartford, Conn.*

champions. I like men who fight for what is right. I like to see a man accept a job and put it over. I even like to tune in on the Lone Ranger because he always fights for the right, always gets his job done, and always wins for the side of Law and Order."

John is a strong believer in the local church. He believes that the local church is the final authority so far as churches go in this earth. He does not believe that a hierarchy has a right to rule over Christians in a manner not acceptable to them. He does not believe that the judgment of any man alive is infallible be he a preacher, deacon, bishop, cardinal, or pope.

He has always been in favor of the distinctive Baptist doctrines but has never been disagreeable in disagreeing with other denominational views. "I expect to see millions of Methodists, Presbyterians, and other Christians when I get to Heaven."

He thinks membership in the average church this day and time is too easy. The lax way in which many churches are organized and run speaks of weakness and if the test of faith came, many churches and church members would not be prepared. The average church member does not realize his church responsibility. "I think about one member in ten does all he can; fifty per cent do nothing at all and the rest are in the shadowy land in between. They work for a while and then fade out; become enthused and then grow lukewarm or cold," he says.

One of the weaknesses of the present church is the lack of visiting. He cited the example of Jesus visiting personally; also, of sending out the twelve and later seventy disciples to visit, and mentioned that they went from house to house and person to person telling the Good News.

He is impressed with the conception of James about practical religion, but then declares that if we accept James we must accept the Revelation and along with it a great many things through faith. Some of the books that have helped him most to understand the Bible were by Dr. John A. Broadus, Dr. John R. Sampey, Spurgeon's Commen-

taries, The American Encyclopedia, all of the study course books published by the Baptist Sunday School Board, and the Bible itself.

Mr. Suttle has fourteen Bibles which he has used throughout the years. These Bibles include a preaching Bible presented to him when he was ordained at the age of eighteen. It was too large for him to carry around in his pocket so Mrs. Suttle preserved it. A grandson, Joe Cabiness, Jr., will get it sometime. A student Bible printed in Nebraska in 1907 is very profuse with marginal notes. A New Testament Bible printed in 1912 shows the Acts and the Epistles and Revelation arranged all in parallel form. A self-pronouncing Bible printed in Chicago in 1926 has been used frequently.

A King James Version printed in 1901 by the Thomas Nelson Company is sometimes used. A looseleaf Testament printed in Chicago in 1910 was so arranged that Suttle could insert any number of sermons between the leaves of the Bible.

He has a red letter Testament printed in 1913. Also, the latest edition of the Oxford Testament is in his library. A large coarse print Bible was presented to him in 1944 by Mrs. Forrest Crowder of Lattimore. A Revised Standard Version, 1952 edition, was presented by his grandson, Joe Cabiness, Jr. Four tiny vest pocket Testaments complete his armamentarium.

A lady said recently, "You certainly have seen enough and heard enough to satisfy you in your 85 years." John replied, "No, I want to keep on seeing, hearing and feeling and preaching as long as the Lord lets me live."

In a speech to the Shelby Kiwanis Club he said recently, "It is true that we in the ministry witness more than any other group. Tragedy, heartbreak, hilarious incidents, joy, beauty, the gamut of human emotions and experience; and a very interesting race is run before our eyes. Yet, the hardest spots of our lives are often the most interesting."

Choice of a sermon has never been too much of a prob-

lem for Brother Suttle because he always kept his ear to the ground so closely that he knew what was going on in the minds of most of his people. He knew what they needed, what they wanted, and what the Lord wanted him to do. However, he said that it's not easy for some of the younger preachers. Sometimes they are so upset about the attitude of their members that he is reminded of a church in which the people had worked themselves into an undesirable state of mind. "The members of this church thought they did not want to hear sermons about Missions. They didn't want to listen to a man who preached on giving. They didn't like evangelism, and they did not like current events. Finally, the young minister in that church asked one of his friends what he could preach about to such a people and the good brother replied, 'Preach on the Jews. There's not a Jew in over 200 miles'."

The Reverend Oliver C. Price, pastor of the First Baptist Church of Glen Alpine, North Carolina, recalls the following Suttle slant on women:

"While I was a student at Wake Forest and while he was president of the State Convention, in a message at the Wake Forest Baptist Church he said, 'All some preachers can talk about is lipstick, hairdos, paint, and beauty treatments used by women in the churches.' His solution: 'Most of them I've seen need it. Let 'em use it. Let 'em use it!'"

In theology proper, John is as orthodox as the original John the Baptist and is as fundamental as the most ardent fundamentalist who can quote the New Testament verbatim. He is also modern enough to see eye to eye with the needs of a changing world. He has changed with the times but strove to keep his people grounded in the New Testament. He believes like other Baptists that the basis for all authority to establish a Baptist Church or any church is the New Testament. He believes that the New Testament along with the rest of the Bible is the inspired Word of God. The New Testament is the first authority

for faith. Every person is himself competent to approach God directly.

For John, a church is "a body of baptized believers who have repented of their sins and have willingly joined the fellowship of other believers in a congregation which is self governed, is democratic and has equal rights for all and special privileges to none, including the minister."

He is not confused like some about what Jesus meant in Matthew 16:18 when He said, "Upon this rock I will build my church." He believes the reference is made to the principles outlined in Peter's confession and not to a mortal man around whom an invincible organization would be gathered.

"The New Testament is replete with references to the church and to the churches. Some of these bodies of believers were in Jerusalem, some away from Jerusalem. Some had been visited by Peter, some had not. They had one common characteristic. All had believed, and all had been baptized. In addition, they had banded themselves together in a Christian and democratic fellowship sharing and working together.

"They had two kinds of officers, pastors and deacons. The pastor or preacher was called of God, was God inspired, God led, and God directed. He preached and taught the Word and cared for the spiritual needs of the little band of followers.

"The deacons cared for the physical needs of the members by name and nature. They were the pastor's helpers."

"Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is the head of the church," says John. As other Baptists believe, he too, feels that the New Testament is the only necessary creed; that it contains all the rules for faith, practice, repentance, salvation, baptism, the Lord's Supper, and the way to eternal life. He does not particularly oppose the Apostles' Creed which is quoted so often by members of other denominations, but he is positive that its quotation has nothing to do with salvation or the doing of good works.

He does believe in God; not only God the Father, but

God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. He believes that Jesus was born of the virgin Mary, lived in this world as a man, was crucified on the cross, later died, and after three days rose again and that he ascended to Heaven to come back at a later date.

Like other Baptists he does balk at the use of the term, "Holy Catholic Church" because he believes that a church is *any* body of baptized believers and in a more inclusive term, all bodies of all baptized believers become the church in a general sense.

He believes the church has two ordinances and that they are both ordered, described and outlined in the New Testament. These are Baptism which is total immersion and is restricted to persons who are old enough to believe and profess belief. Another is the Lord's Supper which to Baptists is simply a memorial meal in the memory of Jesus. Both Baptism and the Lord's Supper are local church ordinances. "We must never mistake that these ordinances are anything except local; that local members prepare, unite in, and partake of these ordinances," he says.

In inviting Christians to come to the Lord's Supper, Brother John was criticized for many years by a few non-Baptists for practicing what they called "closed communion," since usually at the invitation Pastor Suttle would ask that all who came and partook be of the "same faith and order".

His explanation, perhaps over-simplified, is that when Baptists hold the Lord's Supper, they do not exclude Methodists or Presbyterians, or other Protestants; neither did he necessarily include them. This particular supper is for this particular faith and order in memory of Jesus just as a certain family may hold a memorial service such as a birthday dinner or wedding anniversary celebration for a particular member of the family.

Like other Baptists, John also believes that salvation comes first, by God's grace and second, by personal faith in Jesus. He believes in a literal Heaven, a literal Hell, and a real but timeless eternity. However, he quotes many

Scriptures to support his belief that many things will be changed. He accepts the physical resurrection of the body, the second coming of Christ, and the last judgment.

John Suttle's program of faith and its practical application in country churches have been so closely tied to the New Testament, that actually he has had little time for many of the theological and theoretical discussions used by many modern ministers. He says the New Testament has stood the test of time and will continue to stand.

Brother John is not greatly concerned with Catholic dogma. For him the claim that the pope can make no error, *ex cathedra* or otherwise, simply is not true. For him it is not true if the Catholics claim that Mary never died but went to Heaven without death. "If these claims were in the Bible and especially in the New Testament, I would believe them," says he.

He believes that the pope is a great man. He must be a good man to be able to so successfully control an organization like the Catholic Church, but he believes that "no man, be he priest, prelate, or pope can be infallible." Nor is it necessary for an individual to ask a priest, prelate, or pope to intercede for him to God. A man can go to God in prayer in the pulpit, on the prairie, in the forest or in a far-away land. The prayer of Jesus is a model prayer, but anyone can pray. Prayer books are not necessary; special words are not necessary. One can pray with no spoken words at all. Beads not only are not necessary, but become confusing and becloud the real purpose of prayer.

The historical facts and implications of Christ have not been lost upon John. In fact, he studied all these things thoroughly and has dozens of books upon the subjects. He is aware that for many years all Christendom was divided as to whether Christ the Son was the same substance or similar substance as God the Father. He knows that the question was settled, theologically at least, by a council of Christian bishops at Nicea in 325 A.D. He is aware that from the time of Jesus until 325 A.D. Christians in general became Christians by belief and baptism.

From 325 A.D. on for more than one thousand years Christians were in the main only believers in Christ because their rulers, emperors or war lords believed in Christ. Only until after Luther nailed his famous 95 Theses to the church door in Wittenburg, Germany, was the individual again called upon to examine his conscience to see if he could believe or not believe in a personal Saviour and personal salvation.

John has studied all the proposals of the major theologians of Christian history, but they have done little to affect him except to inspire him to do his best. He has been as outspoken for his belief as was John Hus or Dominicus Savanarola. But in this day and time martyrs are burned in a different manner. "In the dark ages, Christ's enemies used fire and now our people use indifference," he says.

So far as I know John Suttle never used the word "eschatology" in the pulpit but he knew what it meant and no one has a better conviction than he about what final things will be such as death, resurrection, and eternal life. He very seldom uses the words modernism, or dogma, or teleology, but he knows what those words mean and talks to his people in simple terms and especially in terms used in the New Testament his hearers have read.

John has believed faithfully in the doctrine of the separation of church and state outlined by the United States Constitution and the Declaration of Independence, and he has continually believed it is much better for Christians to build their own colleges, their own churches, their own charitable institutions, care for their own families and children with their own earnings without aid from a benevolent government. However, he has felt it very foolish for us to allow the whims and notions of a few to completely divorce the teachings of the Bible, the Christian religion, and morals from our education system, especially in our public schools.

Along this line he is a great admirer of Benjamin Frank-

lin who, though no outstanding church man or evangelist, was enough of a Christian to say in effect to the framers of the constitution in Philadelphia that "if God knows and cares enough about the affairs of men to know when a sparrow falls, it is inconceivable that an empire can be built without Him."

John does not believe the time should ever come that the wall of separation between church and state must become so high or so dense that a Christian on one side cannot look through the wall and see on the coin of the realm the inscription, "In God We Trust".

He never quoted a prayer prayed by anyone else except Jesus, although he was certainly an admirer of all the elements mentioned in great prayers such as the prayer attributed to St. Francis of Assisi.

He prayed for peace, for pardon; he asked for light, joy, and hope; he asked that the bereaved be consoled, that material goods be given, that sins be pardoned and that all of us have eternal life, but he put it in his own words in clear, firm, unmistakable sentences that gave his listeners the impression he was talking directly to God and not merely quoting some beautiful phrase from a good man who lived in the forgotten long ago.

He is very certain that present day missionary Baptists are the true branch of the Baptist Church, and the logical defenders and extenders of the Christian religion. He says great evidence for this belief is the fact that Southern Baptists have grown so rapidly the past two or three generations.

The split came among Baptists about 150 years ago when the Primitive Baptists and the so-called Hardshells and other strictly orthodox Baptists gave Missionary Baptists the opportunity for expansion. This allowed unprogressive and non-Missionary elements to "dry up on the vine" so-to-speak.

In his own native county of Cleveland, many years ago Presbyterians were most numerous. They were then superseded by the Methodists who flourished by numbers. In

the past fifty years Baptists have grown so rapidly they now outnumber all other denominations put together in Cleveland County.

Many of his sermons and much of his theology is summarized by an unknown author.

I asked for strength that I might achieve;

I was made weak that I might learn to obey.

I asked for health that I might do greater things;

I was given infirmity that I might do better things.

I asked for riches that I might be happy;

I was given poverty that I might be wise.

I asked for power that I might have the praise of men;

I was given weakness that I might feel the need of God.

I asked for all things that I might enjoy life;

I was given life that I might enjoy all things.

I received nothing I had asked for—all I had hoped for.

My prayers were answered.

XXVI

Brother John's Journey, A Canaan In Carolina

"NOW THE DAY IS OVER."

*I have fought a good fight;
I have finished my course;
I have kept the faith.*

II Timothy 4:7

Intimations of immortality creep closer each year. The limitations of mortality are thrusting their shadows across his path. John has retired but has not laid down his burden.

He was visiting in Boiling Springs upon the dedication of a new parsonage. The Reverend J. L. Jenkins had just retired after 25 years in the ministry and the church had called the Reverend John Farrar. At the dedication service Brother John said, "You have just let one mighty good preacher go and have got another good young fellow to take his place. You folks are so nice to your preachers here in letting your old preacher stay in the old parsonage and building your new preacher a new house.

"Now after John Farrar has worn himself out serving you for fifty years, I want you to call me!"

How then shall we measure a man like Brother John? Is his often repeated phrase, "I Am Bound for the Promised

Land" enough? Can one measure a deer on the run, a bird in flight, or a pilgrim on a journey? Has his work been temporary or permanent, or are his inscriptions wide enough and deep enough to remain in the hearts of his people a generation, a century, or a millennium? Who can tell?

He has not been strictly a Moses; he has had no Pharaoh's princess to claim him; he killed no Egyptians; he got no Commandments from Sinai; nor did he perform any miracles by throwing his staff on the ground.

Like Moses he has been successful at times and a failure at times. Again like Moses he has made mistakes, bitter errors in judgment, steeped in the elements of human frailty. "A few times I struck the rock instead of speaking softly as God commanded," John admits. "Sometimes the water was bitter," he adds.

In it all he has been a leader of people through an era of change, through a "wilderness", as it were, of doubt and indecision, of hunger for righteousness and thirst for salvation.

As a youth he went to Little Egypt for corn; he was educated in a great seminary, the center of theological learning in the South at the time; he was tested in the desert of struggling churches in isolated rural, malarious Carolina at the turn of the century; if bootleggers could be called Philistines, or if indifference of man to the needs of his brother could be likened to the Midianites, or the vagaries of the weather to the giants of Anak, then Brother John has fought most of the preliminary battles for the Promised Land.

Through these battles he led his churches to higher ground in Bible teaching, in stewardship, in evangelism, and in the unfolding and development of Christian personality in the countless thousands who followed him.

He has seen the population of his state and county multiplied 15 times over, and in his churches he strove to match religious and spiritual growth against secular and

political and economic advances in a burgeoning commonwealth.

What then are the factors in his life and personality which have made him great, brought him success, the accolades of the multitude, the laurel wreath of the winner, the praise of his fellow pastors and the love of all who know him?

Wherein has he failed to be a man? What have been his human weaknesses? Has he been patient? Has he been fair? Does he have enemies? If so, does he forgive them?

What of the unsaved with whom he pleaded seven times, and seventy times, but perhaps not seventy times seven? Did he always go the second mile and always give the cloak as well as the coat?

Answers to all these questions Brother John does not attempt to give. Judgment is referred to a greater Judge and a higher court. He has tried to obey God's laws and commandments and follow the Golden Rule. His Bible does not say what the father must do while waiting for a son to come home.

Some who read this book will remain to praise and others will review the story of his life with doubt or even scorn, and say like the old mountaineer who went to the circus and saw for the first time a giraffe, only to blurt out, "There ain't no such animal."

Others will say that he is a great man, but that he could not possibly have done what he did, say what he said, or be what he is reported to be.

Even the simple statistics of his life are staggering. He is almost 86 years of age, has actively pastored 37 churches, several of them nearly forty years at a time; has been moderator of a great Association forty years; president of the North Carolina Baptist State Convention, twice a vice-president; has preached over 30,000 sermons, baptized nearly 10,000 converts into the Kingdom, married 2,000 couples; raised over \$1,000,000 in revenue for the King-

dom of God. He collected a salary of \$109,352.29 for a lifetime of ministry and service in the two Carolinas.

He has sent from his churches approximately forty ordained ministers and hundreds of special workers into full time Christian service. Total membership of his churches at any one time has never exceeded 1,753 (in 1938) but aggregate total memberships of all his churches during the 65 years of his ministry will run into multiple thousands of persons.

He did not try to become great. He did not want to be famous. He has done more. He has become a legend. What Daniel Boone is to hunters, what Davy Crockett is to small fry, and what Abe Lincoln is to story-tellers, John Suttle is to Baptists in North Carolina, especially in the counties and churches where he has lived and served.

A legend in the land of the living! He is a legend in church building, money raising, common preaching, homely philosophy and in the simple religion of country people.

Never a strong man physically, the tasks he has accomplished have been stupendous. Weighing only 95 to 100 pounds and appearing to be frail and ascetic, sometimes sallow and gray, his sinews are of steel, his nerves of platinum, his will of pig iron, and his heart of pure gold. The hard tasks he did at once; the impossible took a little longer.

Perhaps it was *inheritance*, the characteristics of his Irish, English, and German ancestry, the intelligence and willfulness of his forefathers, the ideas and idealism of his grandfather, and the dreams of his mother before he was born or while he was in the cradle. He came from a family of stalwart pioneers, rugged individualists who carved a civilization out of the wilderness of Western North Carolina. He is akin to the leading families of Cleveland and Rutherford Counties. His relatives sit in the high places and make the laws, hold the reins of government, turn the wheels of industry and commerce. Others follow the

plow, work in the home and do the menial tasks of the common man.

He may be great because of the *heritage* in the section where he was born. The settlers came to enjoy religious freedom. They loved and feared God. They built their homes of stout logs with the sweat of their brow and defended them with their lives. They chopped out the highways, built the schools and churches, raised large families and worshipped their God. They were not ashamed to acknowledge Him or to fall upon their knees and pray to Him in their churches, around their tables, or at the hour of sleep. Frugality, hard work, temperance, and discipline were the rule and not the exception.

There were, literally and figuratively, giants in those days. He had the heritage of constitution framers, Indian fighters, nation builders, soldiers, and pioneer ministers handed down to him. The life of his forebears had not been easy and he did not expect life to be easy.

From the family lines of Suttle, Baxter, Blanton, Hamrick, Wray, Linton, and Harrill which produced Brother John, also came a corps of political leaders, statesmen, lawyers, physicians, ministers, and public servants scarcely equalled by any other family connection in North Carolina. This family sent Elisha Baxter to be governor of Arkansas, two governors to Raleigh, the Bostic family to China for almost 200 years of mission service, two judges to the Federal and Superior Court bench, several congressmen to Washington, and sprinkled Western North Carolina with scores of public servants. Intermingled with this family are the Durhams, Dixons, Webbs, Carpenters, Griffins, and Flacks of both Cleveland and Rutherford Counties.

"One reason John Suttle has done well is that he is akin to everybody," said one of his friends.

No doubt, his *environment* had a great deal to do with the making of this man. He had a Christian home. He was reared with six brothers and sisters and learned to give and take in the battles of life. He learned that to get a

dollar one should give a dollar's worth of labor. His parents and grandparents were gentle folks, educated, cultured, refined; yet, hard working, neighborly, Bible reading, frontier Christians. By their birth and their family connections, they were able to take him into the best homes and often took him to different churches.

Early they created in him a desire to want the best of everything and to be the best of everything. They provided for him the best education of the day, and in addition to that, good books and magazines, and invited into their home learned men and women who could stimulate their children to want to know more.

His *formal training* was average and his *family training* above the average. He went to the usual grammar school and a military academy but then skipped a college education and went directly to the Seminary where he studied homiletics, Bible, history, Greek, English, and other related subjects. He did not stay in school long enough to get a doctor's degree; neither did he stop studying after he left school.

Personality traits may be one of the big contributing factors to the success of Brother John.

"He was as mean as the dickens," said one of his friends who knew him as a boy. That doesn't mean there was anything really wrong with him. It was just his way. As a little boy he was full of mischief and curiosity, and would rather play tricks upon somebody than to eat when he was hungry. From these childhood traits he grew to be known as a diplomat, philosopher, optimist, story teller, full of humor, and one who could bring either tears or laughter with his stories. He was practical, very human, progressive, interesting, and a natural born leader with genuine character. He was educated in spiritual desire and developed a dedicated sense of mission.

Brother John liked the out-of-doors, worked and played with horses and dogs, enjoyed a good hunt, and had a wide interest in everything, but most of all he knew people by their first names and loved them and let them know it.

He has the happy faculty of being at home with both high and low, the rich and poor, the educated and uneducated; he is a leader without being pompous, wise in the ways of men, but humble as a child.

Who can say his *genius at organization* was not as great as that of Governor O. Max Gardner, though on a smaller scale? O. Max loved him and praised him and envied him, often sought his advice. Also, can one not say that his total contributions compare favorably with those of Governor Clyde R. Hoey, Author Thomas Dixon, Jr., either of the two Judge Webbs or any of the accepted "great" of Cleveland County, numbered among the living or dead? The impact and impression on many lives testify and say Yes to the question.

John correctly *interpreted the age* in which he lived. He has been able to understand the past, the present, and the future and has tied the three together.

When the final story is written, no doubt the judges will say that *churches* like New Bethel, Double Shoals, Double Springs, and Beaver Dam, and all of the others, had much to do with the molding and making of the final product of Brother John. The elders, deacons, and members were of the same stock and had the same purpose for their lives. They were faithful, able, and earnest. They bore him up, pushed him to the front and followed his leadership. Like a great army they executed the plans of their general.

Without his churches, John Suttle would have been simply another good man.

His *preaching* is simple and his manner direct. By the usual rules of preaching, his grade would be high. He gets perfect audience attention. He is neither prosaic nor dull. He has lifted a vast concourse of preachers, deacons, and visitors literally out of their seats and vaulted them to profound spiritual heights. He can do this with ready wit, sound approach, sound philosophy, convincing logic,



A Character Study



In The Afterglow

poignant truths, and apt illustrations from his broad experience and practical application.

He grew up in the day of the old-time preachers who led their audience to tears by shouting with quavering voices in a sing-song rhythm as they chanted the Scriptures, or exhorted to repentance and salvation, or described the heavenly glories of Christian experience.

From among those giants of oratory Brother John emerged with a shrill, high-toned voice which was yet unmistakably clear and plain. For his preaching he received reward often, praise upon praise, the best of which was described by an eight year old boy, "I understand all he said."

Unspoiled by praise, he took the honors piled upon him in simple grace. Upon his 60th Anniversary in the ministry, more than 3,000 friends gathered in the Shelby ball park to pay him honor and to give him a new automobile. Again upon the completion of 65 years in the ministry, 10,000 people crowded into the grandstand of the Cleveland County Fair to shower him with praise and gifts to be added to the Suttle Memorial Endowment at Gardner-Webb College. These acts of love belie the old saying "A prophet is not without honor save in his own country." Through it all his attitude was: "This is all entirely unnecessary. I enjoy it, of course, but what I have done, I have done simply for my Lord and Master, Jesus."

Love for his wife and family have contributed their share to the making of this unique human. There is one incident in his family life he is sure to remember. It was the time they lived in Smithfield and he had to leave for Raleigh. He was in such a hurry after sleeping late that he barely had time to put on a few clothes and catch the train. He left the house with collar and tie in hand and did not take time to say good-bye.

In a matter of hours the train wrecked. While it hurtled down the embankment with some passengers being killed

and others injured, Brother John said, in that moment when he was flying through the air and the car turned over and over, that he made up his mind in a twinkling: "If I ever get through this horrible nightmare I will never leave home again without telling my wife and children good-bye.

"I thought if I had only taken time to say good-bye I would have missed the train and the wreck. If I had been killed it would have been a terrible thing to report to Saint Peter that my wife and children were down at Smithfield, but that I had not had time to say good-bye," he said.

First things first has been his passion. Like the old Puritan preacher of John Bunyan's pen, he has his eye upon heaven. His Bible is always in his hand, the world is at his back, the earth is at his feet, and truth is always upon his lips. With this faith he has been able to lengthen the shadows of the great ministers of the past who have gone before him and to extend their shadows in his sons of the ministry who are to take his mantle whenever it falls.

Other ingredients which must be mentioned are his good *health habits* and temperance in all things; punctuality, regularity, methodical and systematic ways. These have required *will power* and *won't power*, to coin a phrase.

And last, but not least, is a *circular letter* to a district Association, written by a relative over a century ago, outlining the simple principles of a New Testament church and demonstrating what a called and dedicated minister must do to lead such a church. (See Appendix.)

He is popular but he does not fear unpopularity. He tells people what the Lord wants them to know and what he thinks they ought to do. On one occasion at a small rural church which had promised him \$200 for the year's work, he came to the end of twelve months and the sum had not been paid.

"I needed the money. I had to buy groceries just like everybody else. I preached about money that day and asked for an explanation, saying that there had been such

an agreement, and lo and behold!, the members of the church came up and put the money on the table. There was not only the \$200 that I had been promised but an extra hundred dollars. They had the money in their pockets all the time!"

John has more time for thinking, now that eight and a half decades of the journey are over. Sometimes in order to do his thinking more clearly, he rides out to one of the rural churches where he and his grandfather used to preach. From a promontory overlooking a small stream he can look in all directions, forward and backward, both in space and time, almost to eternity.

Across this pleasant little stream is a green meadow, just beyond some cultivated fields, and farther in the distance a group of purple hills gently lifting themselves to meet the blue sky. This panorama seems to beckon to him with a message, "Brother John, your journey is almost over. Here is your Jordan. Before you is your Promised Land. Cross over and take possession." Wistfully, and with a wishful eye, he surveys the scene and leans forward in expectation, almost takes a step downward to the water's edge.

But no! The time is not yet. While waiting for the Lord to name the day and the hour, John can look backward over the years and think of the concourse of events and happenings which brought him to his Jordan and his Canaan.

Some of his thoughts he puts into words while others flit through his consciousness and conscience in the nature of a prayer, or of a wish, or of desires filled, or of longings still empty and unsatisfied. Were he inclined, he might soliloquize:

"I wouldn't change a thing. I am perfectly satisfied with the way God has protected and cared for me and with the marvelous way Jesus has loved me, blessed me, and saved me. The only thing I would change is people, includ-

ing myself. I'd try to be a little more understanding, a little more forgiving, a little more like Jesus.

"How I wish I could have done more. The time seems so short, my efforts so feeble, my talents so few.

"If my life can be likened to a journey to a promised land, and I think it can, then I am so grateful for my Guide and Leader. If I have been a guide and leader, I thank God for my followers, especially for my sons in the ministry and for the few Joshuas, the Calebs, the Gideons and the Deborahs who helped me.

"Thank God for the churches. For all the churches I have worked in, and for all the churches everywhere, at home and overseas. I love the churches and their fellowship and hope they will grow and expand and multiply until every person in the wide world can hear and bow to the name of Jesus.

"I am also thankful to God for my troubles. Everybody has trouble. Man is born to trouble as the sparks fly upward. Like the Apostle Paul I have had a deep sorrow, a personal burden in my life. It has bothered me, perplexed me and sorely tried me. It has also strengthened me and increased my faith. I have tried to be a good minister, a good neighbor, a good father, and a good husband.

"Of all my trouble, and of all your troubles, too, I can only say that these things we do not understand. We see through a glass darkly, but one day we will see clearly and will understand. We will see as we are seen. We will see all and know all, and will be happy in Jesus.

"When I have crossed my Jordan I know I shall see all the saints who have gone before me. My parents and grandparents will be there; my friends will be there; the ones I leave behind will join me in that happy land. All who name the name of Jesus will be reunited there. And I shall know them and greet them. This fact I now know better than anything else in this world."

Then lifting his eyes to the far horizon, and with an ear turned slightly to catch the first strains of victorious

celestial music, the man we have known in this story as "Brother John" says with fervor:

"Finally, and most of all, thank God for the JOURNEY and for CANAAN."

"FOR HE THAT BELIEVETH ON THE SON HATH
ETERNAL LIFE."

"THE ETERNAL GOD IS MY REFUGE AND UN-
DERNEATH ARE THE EVERLASTING ARMS."

Appendix

1. Will of George Suttle.
2. Will of Joseph Suttle.
3. Eulogy to Joseph Suttle.
4. Early Baptist Pioneers.
5. Circular letter to Kings Mountain Association, 1855.

WILL OF GEORGE SUTTLE

“In the Name of God, Amen!

“I, George Suttle, of the county of Rutherford, being at present very sick and weak of body, but of perfect mind and memory, thanks to Almighty God, calling to mind the mortality of my body, knowing that it is appointed for all men to die, do make and ordain this my last will and testament, revoking all others heretofore made by me.

“First, principally, I resign my soul to God who gave it, trusting in His eternal goodness. My body I commit to the earth to be buried decently at the discretion of my executors, and as to the worldly goods that it has pleased God to bless me with in this life I give and dispose of in the following manner:

“First, my will is that all of my just debts be paid.

“Secondly, I give and bequeath to my well beloved wife, Nancy Suttle, Dassa, a negro woman, Frank and Matilda her two children; also Ned, a negro boy, to be by her held, and enjoyed in her own right during his natural life, and after her decease the said Negroes with their increase, if any, to be equally divided among my children. My will further is that all my livestock of every description that I shall die possessed, shall be and remain in the possession of my wife to be used toward the support of my family during their minority and for the benefit of the whole during their continuance together, unless in the opinion of my wife and my executors there is or should be more than necessary for their support, then and in that case I would advise or rather my will is that the surplus be disposed of to the best advantage and equally divided among my children. Further, as respecting my household furniture and implements of husbandry and working tools of every description, including the whole of my personal estate (not otherwise disposed of) my will is that it be and remain in the possession of my wife to be used for the support and maintenance of my children during their minority or continuance together. And further,

my will is if any of my sons or daughters, after arriving at full age, should marry or separate themselves from the family that then and in that case that each of my children shall receive a bed and furniture of value or any other article that in the opinion of my said wife and executors can be spared out of the common stock and they dispose of to be accounted for in their distributive share.

“Further, my will is that the residue of my Negroes, vis: Winny, Violet, Ben, Lewis, Jacob, Jack, Jerry, Jenny, Harry, Harriett, Suckey, Celia, Davie, Lucy, and their increase, if any, shall at the expiration of three years and six months from date, which shall be the first day of August 1819, be valued by five judicious men of good repute, who is to be nominated by the county court of Rutherford at the July term immediately preceding the aforesaid day of August, and providing the whole of them does not attend on the day of days set apart for the purpose that those who of that number do attend shall supply the number absent by the men of their own choice, having respect to their character as aforesaid—that the real value they ascertained of my said Negroes shall be divided into lot agreeable to the number of my children, to wit: William Byars Suttle, Sarah, Elizabeth, Joseph, Benjamin, Nancy, George, Susannah and John Suttle—that in apportioning the said lots care shall be taken to make each lot as equal as possible, consistent with justice and humanity, which said lottery shall be conducted in an open and fair manner in the presence of said commissioners and my executors—that immediately on the aforesaid division taking place, those of my children who are of full age will be entitled to their distribution share of said Negroes agreeable to said agreement, liable to the demand of the legacies if there should be any excess in those to be divided, and to be accounted for in the manner that my executors shall deem most advisable, and for these my will is that until the expiration of the term aforesaid my Negroes shall be continued in the possession of my wife and employed for the benefit of the whole in providing what is necessary for their subsistence.

“And further, my will is that my said wife remain in possession of the whole of my buildings, orchard, land, instruments and improvements that I died possessed of to be used and cultivated during her natural life for the support of herself and such of my children as shall continue to live with her and under her care and as respects that portion of my estate that shall fall to the lot of my children who are under age, particularly three Negroes. I leave it with my dear wife and my executors to manage according to their discretion in hiring or employing it on the premises toward the maintenance of the family, and further and finally my will is that after the death of my said wife that the whole of my lands

with all the appurtainences thereto with every other species of my property of whatsoever description not otherwise disposed of shall be sold in an open and fair manner, and equally divided among my children, so as to make the whole of their distribution shares equal, and in order that this my last will, be duly executed I nominate and appoint my loving and dutiful son William B. Suttle, and my trusty friends William McKinney and George McKinney to be sole executors of this my last will and testament. In witness whereof I have hereunto set my hand and seal this first day of February, 1816.

George Suttle

Signed, sealed and acknowledged in the presence of us the subscribing witnesses.

Johanathan Hampton

A. Miller

WILL OF JOSEPH SUTTLE

RECORD OF WILLS

JUNE, SEPIONS 1861

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA CLEVELAND COUNTY

Know all men by these present that I, Joseph Suttle, of the aforesaid county and state being in sound state of mind, but laboring under the afflicting hand of Almighty God and feeling that my time may be short on this earth, I therefore make this my last will and testament.

Art. 1st — I give my body to its kindred dust and my soul to God who gave it.

Art. 2nd — I order that my funeral expenses and all my honest debts be paid.

Art. 3rd — I will and bequeath to my beloved wife Elizabeth Elvira Suttle all my personal and real estate to hold and keep during her natural life or widowhood but should she marry, I then order that two thirds of all my property above mentioned be sold and equally distributed among my children at each coming to the age of 21 years, and that the remaining third be given to my wife to keep and hold forever.

Art. 4th — I order and will all the moneys due me be collected and appropriated to the payment of my debts, if they should fall short of paying these debts I order the

remainder of a tract of land in Rutherford County known as the Mill Tract to be sold and used to pay the remainder of my debts. Should there be money left on hand after all my debts be paid, I order that it be given to my wife for her own benefit and the benefit of my children.

Art. 5th —I order and appoint my wife, Elizabeth E. Suttle, Executrix and John Blanton Executor to this my last will and testament whereunto I have set my hand and seal in the presence of
Elijah Eskridge
J. A. L. Wray

This 24th day of May, 1861
Joseph Suttle (SEAL)

EULOGY TO JOSEPH SUTTLE

Messrs. Editors:—How brief and uncertain is life? Truly it is a vapor that appeareth for a little while and then vanishes away! To the brevity and uncertainty of life all are to the record. Hence in the mysterious dispensation of God's providence it becomes my sad duty to notice the death of our much esteemed and beloved brother, Elder Joseph Suttle: he departed this life on the 26th day of May, 1861.

In his death the community has lost one of its brightest ornaments and noblest characters. It is indeed with grief that we have to record the loss which the Baptist church has sustained in the early departure of this good and noble man. No one did more for the promotion of Christ's Kingdom, none would have done more for its success. It lay near his devoted heart while he was among us, and is perhaps an object of deep interest and solicitude to him in the mansions of eternal bliss.

Brother Suttle was born in Rutherford County on the 25th of April 1827 and was baptized into the fellowship of the Baptist Church at Concord in 1845. Feeling himself called of God to the great and responsible work of this gospel ministry, he was ordained to preach in 1849 in which capacity he labored most efficiently up to the time of his death for it was in the strength of years and in the midst of his great usefulness that it was said, "The Master calleth for thee." That summons he, like the great apostle of the Gentiles, obeyed; not with grief but with joy feeling that for him to live was Christ but to die was gain.

He, like a soldier, fell at his post with sword in hand. He has been the pastor at Double Springs for twelve years (with the

exception of one year) and we feel assured that his labors at that place have been abundantly blessed; and the church, in his death, has sustained a loss not easily repaired. Although he had but little education, he displayed talents of the highest order and preached the Gospel of Christ with an ability rarely equalled.

His holy life well illustrated the doctrine of regeneration which was his zeal for the cause of Christ and knowledge of the Bible that those who engaged with him on religious topics always received appropriate religious instruction. But why speak more of the virtues of this great and noble man? For it is difficult to convey a correct idea of his worth and merit to strangers! We presume it is already known and appreciated by all who wish to do him justice. Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints.

Brother Suttle has left a truly devoted and affectionate wife, four lovely and interesting children and a large circle of friends to mourn his irreparable death. But they sorrow not without hope, for their mourning is rendered joyful by the bright anticipation of meeting him where parting is unknown.

A day or two before his death, he called his devoted wife and children to his bedside and imparted to them that counsel and instruction which a pious Christian husband and father is capable of giving.

May the consolation of the ever blessed gospel calm all the troubles of our bereaved sister and teach her sweetly to submit to her Heavenly Father who doeth all things well and does not willingly afflict those who love him; and may the dear children of our deceased brother imitate the example of their loving father and become flowers of the blessed Redeemer that they may be prepared to meet Him in that happy land where no parting tears are ever shed.

And now my dear sister, be assured that you have the sympathy of many warm hearts and permit me to say that I have no doubt but lost loved one is reaping his reward in heaven; and that the God of Elijah will assist you in raising your fatherless children. May the Lord bless you and yours.—

J. H. Yarboro

EARLY BAPTIST PIONEERS

Elder Drury Dobbins was born April 7, 1776, in York County, South Carolina. Mr. Dobbins did not have any formal education except for the old field school curriculum. He was for a time an active deacon in the church at State Line. Mr. Dobbins entered

the ministry at the age of twenty. Along with being so young, he was handicapped by not having a real knowledge of the English grammar. This did not block the way for him because with the help of the Holy Spirit, he realized he was not defeated.

Elder Dobbins was very firm and frank in all his beliefs. His theology was based on the New Testament from which he proved many arguments and debates among his members. Mr. Dobbins had been accused of opposing missions and education, but this was not a true statement. However, he did say that he did not agree with the idea of educating a young man with the hopes of making a minister out of him. "Ministers are called of God and not made by men," he said.

Elder Dobbins was about 5'10" tall, weighed 200 pounds, had black hair and eyes. He died May 19, 1847.

Elder Josiah Durham was born April 6, 1801, in Rutherford County, North Carolina. At the age of 28 he joined the Sandy Run Baptist Church under the pastoral care of Elder Drury Dobbins. In 1835, Josiah was licensed by this church to go out and preach, and in 1839, he was ordained into the full work of a minister. Mr. Durham died August 2, 1840. Although his time on this earth was short, he was considered a very acceptable minister of the Gospel.

Elder Columbus Durham was born April 28, 1844, in Rutherford County, North Carolina. He became a member of the High Shoals Church in the Kings Mountain Association. Soon afterward he had to serve his country in the Confederate States Army but his Christian character even found its place there. Columbus was blessed countless times by conducting prayer meetings among the servicemen. After his discharge from the army, Mr. Durham enrolled at Wake Forest College and was graduated in 1871.

Elder John Swilliving Ezell was born January 29, 1825, in Spartanburg County, South Carolina. He was licensed to preach in 1841 by the Buck Creek Baptist Church. Later Elder John moved into the Broad River Association of North Carolina and was chosen to be Moderator in 1873-74.

Education for this man was not a reality as far as a formal education was concerned. He made the statement, "In my school days I never saw an English grammar. When I married I could not read a chapter in the New Testament correctly; my wife aided me greatly in learning to read."

Elder Landrum Cicero Ezell was born May 16, 1843, in Spartanburg County, South Carolina. He was baptized by his father,

Elder John S. Ezell, and licensed to preach by the Macedonia Church.

Unlike his father, Elder L. C. was a scholar in English and engaged himself in teaching school. At the time of his ordination, Brother Ezell belonged to a church in Shelby but later went back to the Spartanburg body and became Moderator of the Association.

Elder Pleasant Daniel Gold was born March 25, 1833, in Cleveland County, North Carolina. At twenty years of age he joined Double Springs Baptist Church and was baptized by Elder Joseph Suttle.

Mr. Gold was married to Miss Julia Pipkins of Goldsboro, North Carolina, by Elder N. B. Cobb. Elder Gold states, "that a few years after this I was very much exercised about my own condition and afterward became convinced that salvation is of the Lord Jesus who is the righteousness of His people. I also was for years much exercised concerning the doctrine and practices of the Missionary Baptists and becoming convinced that they did not hold the doctrine of God our Savior, and had also departed from the ancient landmarks in accepting so many institutions of men, my mind was irresistibly led to the Primitive Baptists.

"I united with them and was baptized by Elder C. B. Hassell at Kehukee Church, Halifax County, North Carolina, on the second Sunday in March, 1870, since which time I have been with them, and having obtained mercy of the Lord, I continue to this present."

Elder George Pinckney Hamrick was born August 23, 1849, in Cleveland County, North Carolina. He joined the Boiling Springs Baptist Church in August 1863, and was licensed to preach in 1874 after which he entered college at Wake Forest. He was a good pastor, very acceptable preacher, a good worker and endeavored to carry out Missions, Sunday School work and all phases of the Church program.

This statement has been made of Elder Hamrick: "His style of preaching is argumentative and persuasive, mixed with much tenderness and melting pathos."

Elder Berryman Hicks was born July 1, 1778, in Spartanburg County, South Carolina. Mr. Hicks was generally attractive in appearance, being above the ordinary height and weighing from 250 to 300 pounds. His hair was dark and his eyes hazel. In 1800 he became a member of the State Line Church and attended sessions of the Broad River Association in Rutherford County, North Carolina. Elder Hicks was ordained to preach in 1808 and went

about preaching the Gospel everywhere. He and Elder Drury Dobbins worked much together.

"Elder Hicks was a great revivalist, and by his persuasive, tender and pathetic manner, he, through divine grace, accomplished much apparent good in building up a religious interest which at that time was in a drooping and depressed condition."

Along with being a great preacher, Mr. Hicks exercised his abilities in science and literature. He was a good orator and wrote some poetry.

Elder Wade Hill was born July 21, 1813, in Rutherford County, North Carolina. He was a self-educated man and became a preacher with few equals. As Brother Suttle, Mr. Hill's heart was strongly enlisted in all the benevolent works of our Convention and Association.

After his death in 1878, these resolutions were made by the Green River Association: Resolved—

1. That we deeply sympathize with the bereaved family who have sustained the loss of such a husband and father.
2. That we sympathize with our sister, the Green River Association in the loss of such an excellent minister.
3. That we pray God may, in the abundance of His goodness and plentitude of His mercies, grant that these sad afflictions may work out for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.

Elder Hill was six feet tall, weighed 200 pounds, and had dark hair and eyes. He was one of the most dignified looking men around. Everyone, stranger or not, paid attention to him whenever he spoke.

Elder Jacob Asbury Hoyle was born March 21, 1850, in Burke County, North Carolina. His parents moved to Cleveland County when young Hoyle was only two years old. His father was a school teacher and Jacob took advantage of going to school.

When he was 19, Jacob married Miss Ellen Crowder and later moved to Gaston County where he lived near Cherryville. He was converted under Rev. A. C. Irvin and was licensed to preach in March 1881. He did Missionary work in the Kings Mountain Association.

Elder James Milton Webb was born October 7, 1802, in Rutherford County, North Carolina. He was licensed to preach in 1834

by High Shoals Church and later became clerk of the Broad River Association. He was appointed to preach the introductory sermon in 1837. After the Broad River Association split to form a second Association, Mr. Webb became Moderator of the New Green River Association.

Before he entered the ministry, Mr. Webb served several times in the legislature of the state. He also was elected clerk of the Superior Court which office he held for sixteen years.

Being married twice, Mr. Webb had sixteen children of which only one became a minister. All of them professed religion.

Elder Webb died April 24, 1854.

CIRCULAR LETTER, 1855

The King's Mountain Baptist Association, to the Churches in Union—

Greeting:

Dear Brethren:—According to an appointment of last Association, we address you upon the subject of Missions.

In entering upon the discussion of the subject, we would implore the assistance and direction of that Spirit which guides in the way of all truth. The subject of Missions is one of vast importance and vital interest. It would fill an angel's hand or a Savior's heart. This subject ought to interest every Christian, for by this means, the nations of the earth are to be given to the Son as an inheritance, and the utmost parts of the earth for a possession. Therefore let us love and esteem it, and especially because our suffering Savior was himself a missionary, and says, "this is the way, walk ye in it."

Christ was the embodiment and living illustration of divine goodness. The whole history of His earthly career may be comprehended in a single sentence. "He went about doing good." For this, He came into the world. For this, He lived, suffered and at last died on the cross. He brought all the resources of His Godhead and the office of His Sonship to carry on the great work of doing good. He became poor that we, through His poverty, might become rich. He took of the things of the Father and showed them unto us. He cared not for comfort, human rank nor honor. He strove not for a crown nor a kingdom of this world.

His ambition (if we may so speak) was only to do good. To accomplish His mission He took a place among the most humble, and carefully ministered to the wants of all. Every line is an emblem of benevolence. Go with us to the garden, dear brethren,

behold the Savior in the stillness of the night giving vent to the agonizing emotions of His soul! He is bowed to the ground, and as the load of excruciating agony weighs upon Him, O! what grief and sorrow! See the bloody sweat falling to the ground. Why all this? For the good of man. Behold Him in the judgment hall, suffering abuse and in Calvary. He is there nailed to the wood. Thus He bleeds and dies! Why all this intense suffering? To do good unto men. Yes, says the opposer of missions, that is the kind of missionary we want, that will do all the good he can and have nothing for it.

But this character should remember that, although the Savior was able to multiply the few loaves and fishes to feed a host in the wilderness, and could fast forty days and forty nights, yet He made it the duty of the people to minister unto Him, and they did so. "And Joana and Susanna and many others ministered unto Him of their substance" (Luke vii:3). Just so He would have His people act toward His ministers, in this and every other age of the world. Although He could feed them, as they did Elijah, yet He says His ministers shall not go at warfare at his own expense but they that preach the Gospel shall live of the Gospel.

Notwithstanding the Savior was a great blessing to the world, while He was upon earth, yet He says, it is needful for the world "that I go away." So in the absence of the Savior, the great work of diffusing abroad the light of eternal truth, was committed to the church. This church is that kingdom, that shall break in pieces all other kingdoms of the earth, and shall stand forever as a monument to the glory of its author. This glorious kingdom is the light of the world; it is the instrumentality, by means of which, the world is to be regenerated and saved. This heavenly kingdom of holiness and love, is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth. To this church has been committed a sacred treasure. It is the truth as it is in Jesus. This truth has been committed to the church, and it is able to save the soul, being the eternal truth of God, and it is the duty of the church to sustain, preserve and promulgate it in the world. How energetic then ought the church to be in the cause of missions! Founded herself, on the rock of eternal ages, she is destined to be the means of upholding the truth in the world. She has received, that she may impart it to others. Her mission is a mission of mercy to the lost sons and daughters of men.

But, we regret to say, that she does not exert that influence and power to save a sinking world, that she ought. There are several things that clog the wheels of Zion, and weaken her power which tend to retard her progress in the conversion of the world, one of

which we shall notice: *Division of Sentiment*. This is one great obstacle to the onward march of Zion, especially in regard to the nature of her mission. While some are trying to push on the car of salvation they meet with a great deal of opposition, even from their brethren, by reason of conflicting views; owing to this cause she has lost that simplicity, peace and unity which her dying Savior prayed might be hers forever; and while the world He came to save is going down to death, she is wasting her time and strength in mutual broils and controversies about the nature of her mission, which she ought long ago to have known. And what is the cause of all this division of sentiment with its ruinous train of consequences? The history of the past eighteen hundred years attests the truth that it is, in consequence of partiality, prejudice, education or tradition; for the first breathings of a newly-converted soul is, that God's kingdom might come, and over all prevail, which would continue to be the case, if the judgment was not warped by some of the things above mentioned.

Oh! would she but emerge from under the clouds of ignorance in which she is involved, and shake herself from every clog, and execute her mission more fully! How mighty would be her energies in the subjugation of the world, and how like the voice of God would her voice be sounded through the abodes of unbelief and sin! But instead of these, many, it seems, would lock the wheels of salvation, and impede the progress of the angel that flies in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting Gospel to preach unto men; and instead of converting the world to God, we fear they have become themselves partially converted to the world. O! would the church but arise above the dim and murky atmosphere of earth and lay hold with a deathless grasp upon the immutable promises of God! what a revolution would be wrought in her feelings and views! and how bright would be that light which she would scatter throughout the world! for the church is destined to be the great fountain of light to a guilty world—the reservoir from which is to flow forth the streams of salvation to a perishing world!

Her mission will not be accomplished until every nation on earth shall acknowledge the Lord and be made the recipients of that truth which she was commissioned to preach,—not until the heathen shall be given to the Son as an inheritance, and the utmost parts of the earth for a possession.

The church is said to look forth as the morning sun that illuminates the earth, rises higher and higher, scattering the shades of night and lighting up this dark earth until every valley and remote candle of the church was lit up more than eighteen hundred years ago, and has been looking forth, from that time down to the pres-

ent. Though for eighteen centuries she has been buffeted by the waves of persecution and by false brethren, and though the lightnings have played around her, and clouds and darkness have involved her, yet her course is onward—still she glides along, spreading wider and wider the light of eternal Truth—being guided by the light of the past and the infallible Word of God; but let us look down through the vista of the future, that we may learn the future triumphs of the church: here a glorious prospect lies before us. The effects she has already wrought are but the presage of her future triumphs; yet she can not triumph without a conflict. Then let every Christian pray, let the conflict come—we will not remain idle spectators of the scene; we will enter the field of battle under the blood-stained banner of the cross; we will raise the Son of righteousness higher and higher until every valley and dark corner of the earth is lit up by His rays, and His glory shall cover the earth as the waters cover the basin of the great deep.

Then, dear brethren, we should look abroad and see that darkness yet covers the earth, and gross darkness the people. Look over the briny deep, and there behold mothers sacrificing their children to appease the wrath of their deities, made with their own hands! and where is the Christian that is not willing to lend a helping hand to rescue innocent babes from being crushed before the wheels of the great car of juggernaut? That Christian ought not to be found on the face of the earth.

We remember once asking an anti-missionary if one of his children was carried to a heathen land and left in that dark and benighted country, if he would be willing that some missionary should be sent to preach the Gospel to that child, and the only answer he gave us was, "that alters the case." Now, we awfully fear this is the case with too many. Because the heathen are not their children, according to the flesh, they are concerned but little about them. How much more praiseworthy and Christian-like the conduct of a noble-hearted lady in one of the great cities of the Union, when she discovered a frightened horse running away with a vehicle, and a little child therein, she became so distressed as to immediately run out into the street and cry aloud for some efforts to be made to save the child! her daughter at the same time rebuking her and telling her that "it was not her child!" "I know it" she replied, "but it is someone's child." Let us rather act the part of this good, tender-hearted lady, and let us also act the Good Samaritan—not pass by our fellow-creatures in distress or in a perishing condition and have no compassion on them. Let us also act the part of the little maid that was taken captive by the Assyrians out of the land of Israel, who waited on Naaman's wife,

who said: "Would to God that my Master was with the prophet in Samaria, for he would recover him of his leprosy."

We should not only be missionaries in word, but in deed and in truth, for when it was necessary that the house of the Lord should be built at Jerusalem, (Ezra 1:5) "there rose up the chief of the fathers of Judah and Benjamin, and the priests and Levites, with all them whose spirit God has raised to go up to build the house of the Lord; and all they that were about them strengthened their hands with vessels of silver, with gold, and with goods, with beasts, and with many precious things." Shall we be less charitable and willing to strengthen the hands of the men of God, who are going to and fro in the earth, to establish the house of the Lord in all the world, by giving our substance to send the Bible, and the man of God to the heathens, who have never heard of God, that they might call on Him and be saved?

Another example, when the demoniac of Gadara was brought to his right mind, (Mark v.19,2) Jesus said unto him, "Go home to thy friends and tell them how great things the Lord has done for thee," and he departed and began to publish in Decapolis, how great things Jesus had done for him and all men did marvel." Ought not we as Christians to do the same, and if some of us cannot publish the truth abroad we can support those that can, and we must do it if we do our duty.

Another example, (Luke 11:17) When the angels of the Lord had informed the shepherds that a Savior was born in Bethlehem, the shepherds immediately made known abroad the sayings that was told them concerning the Child. And cannot we, dear brethren, make known abroad, that Jesus is not only born into the world, but that He has suffered, died, and rose again for the justification of all that believe on Him. This we can do by loosing the hands of our ministers, while we say with the poet:

"Go messengers of peace and love,
To sinners plunged in shades of night,
Like Gabriel sent from fields above,
Be yours to shed celestial light."

And let it be in deed, as well as word, for there are many that say and do not.

Another example, and this ought to shame many called Christians, who have rendered so little to the Lord for all his benefits. (Luke xvii. 15-18) "When Jesus had healed ten lepers, and one of them when he saw that he was healed, turned back and with a loud voice glorified God, and Jesus answered and said, "Were there not ten cleansed, and where are the nine?" Is it possible that nine Christians out of ten just sit down and never glorify God

in carrying out that great commission, "Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature?" "Go ye therefore and teach all nations." But perhaps the nine says, this command is only to the tenth to-wit: the minister, and we are exempt. Let them take notice when the Savior ascended on high as the captain of our salvation, He gave gifts unto men, and doubtless some of these gifts were the ministry of the cross, and they are servants of the church, and are to obey her Gospel calls and orders. They are represented as the servants of the church, serving the church as an ox serves his owner. Suppose A was to bid your servant to come and labor in his farm, and at the same time had no power or authority to say to you to send him, what would it avail? Then, you see, dear brethren, that the command is to both, it is to the minister to go, and to the church at the same time to send him. And if the minister refuses to go, he should remember that "woe is me if I preach not the Gospel"; and if the church refuse to send and enable him to go, she should remember that it is written "woe unto them that are at ease in Zion."

We should be willing at least to devote some of our substance and time to the Lord, but this is very hard for some to do, and they will contend that it is not their duty. But what says the law and the testimony? (I Chron. xxix. 4-6) In the building of the temple David shows his liberality and says that he had given even three thousand talents of silver, and then says, who then is willing to consecrate his services this day to the Lord? Then, dear brethren, the church of Christ is to be built up in all the world; and if it required gold and silver in the days of David, to carry on the work of the Lord, why not now? Do we suppose the Lord has lowered His demands in consequence of the covetousness of His people? Not in the least; but to the contrary He has raised them, for where much is given much is required. As our property increases; for we are sure our obligation to throw into the treasury of the Lord increases; for we are commanded to give according to what we have. Then how hardly shall the rich enter into the Kingdom of Heaven, whom God has blessed with a great deal of the goods of the world? And yet they will shut up their bowels of compassion toward the brethren that are perishing for the bread of life. And

"The poor, the object of God's love,
Who want and famine dread."

(Eccl. xx. 1) Solomon, in giving directions for charity, says "Cast thy bread upon the waters, for thou shalt find it after many days." "Give a portion to seven, and also to eight, for thou knowest not that scattereth yet increaseth; and there is that withholdeth more

than is meet, and tendeth to poverty." "The liberal soul shall be made fat." The Savior was careful in His day to notice the liberal soul—so much so that He stood over against the Treasury, and He saw the rich man casting in much, and also the poor widow cast in her two mites, and He said that she had cast in more than they all. And the Savior commands His people to sell what they have and give. This was His advice to that young man that wished to know what good thing he must do, yet he refused to do it. Just so it is with many called Christians in this our day and time; if the ministers of Christ tell them that they ought to give to the missionary cause, they go away offended, like that young man; but, my dear brethren, it is our duty to send the Word of God far and wide.

How few Christians in this day and time are willing to act the part of the primitive Christians, who sold their possessions and goods and parted them as every man had need. "Neither was there any that lacked; for as many as were possessors of houses or lands, sold them and distribution was made unto every man according as they had need."

Some churches will say they are willing to pay for their own preaching, but they are unwilling to support a minister to go and preach to others; but the Apostle says to the Corinthians that he robbed other churches to do them service; i.e., other churches supported him when he was preaching to them, when they ought to have done it—and the reason was the Corinthians had not yet learned their duty. We that know our duty should be willing to send them ministers, that they may learn their duty. "But," some will say, "charity should commence at home." Well then, be sure that you do not muzzle the mouth of the ox that treads out your corn. We are sorry to say that there are churches that do not do their duty in this respect; such churches ought to be afraid that the cries of the children of those ministers who have went a war-faring at their own expense and fed the flock and did not eat of the milk thereof, and stood at the altar and labored day and night, and was not made partakers of the things of the altar, will rise up against them and condemn them, when they are waiting to hear that welcome applause. "Well done, good and faithful servant."

There is one thought that should stimulate every Baptist to action; that is—God has kept us, as a people, distinct from all other societies in the world. What society but this could have subsisted amidst the mutations of a hating world? Where are now the mighty empires of antiquity? They are but an empty name—live only in history, crushed by bloody wars. But the church of Christ, though she has undergone many revolutions, remains and will remain

when the consumption determined by the Lord of hosts shall come upon all the earth. Therefore, dear brethren, we ought to look around us and say not, "There are four months and then cometh harvest; for behold the fields are white already to harvest." We should remember that thousands of the human family are perishing for want of the bread of life, every day that we live in the world; therefore let us up and be doing while it is day, for the night cometh when no man can work. Let us look through the telescope of love, over all the earth where the Gospel has not been preached, and see the ignorance, darkness, superstition, idolatry, cruelty, and perishing condition of man! and will not that zeal for salvation of a sinking world become like fire shut up in the bones? And may the cry be extorted from the bosom of every Christian, "Oh! that my head were waters and my eyes were a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night" for the perishing condition of man! And may Zion awake and arise, and shake herself from every clog, and travel in her strength until many sons and daughters shall be born of God on the heathen shores! It seems unnecessary to prove that the heathen cannot be saved without the Gospel; for it is so plain it needs no proof. Yet we will cite your attention to a few Scripture texts: The Apostle says "that it has pleased the Lord, through the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe." And again, "Without faith it is impossible to please God." And again, "He that comes to God must believe that He is, and He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him." Again, "How can they believe on Him of whom they have not heard, and how can they hear without a preacher?" The Eunuch, with the Scriptures in his hand, says: "How can I understand them, except some man guide me?" How, then, can the heathen believe, without the assistance of the Bible and teachers?

It is perfect nonsense to talk of belief in a thing never heard of. Then if the heathen are saved it must be upon some unknown plan different from that of the Gospel, yet we read of but one cistern being hewn out, and but one system being set up by our Savior to save sinners. But some will say like Peter, the heathen are unclean, and, therefore, not worthy of the Gospel and God does not intend they shall hear it. The answer to this is, "The times of this ignorance God winked at, but now commands all men every where to repent." And he moreover says, "He is no respecter of person."

It was predicted by the prophet, that the once hostile nations around about Jerusalem "should pay them annual visits and join in their festivals." Yea, saith the prophet Isaiah, "From new moon to new moon, and from Sabbath to Sabbath, shall all flesh come to worship before the Lord of hosts." Now it is evident that these

high predictions were never accomplished in the earthly Zion, and Jerusalem, yea, it is impossible they could be in their literal sense, the nature of things forbids it. But to the spiritual Zion and heavenly Jerusalem they have been fulfilled, and shall be more and more accomplished. For this holy hill must be established in all the world, and we can come to the city of the living God without a pilgrimage. "Then the wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard with the kid, and the young lion and fating together, and they shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain." When shall these high predictions be fully accomplished? Not until God's kingdom will come and over all prevail. Then the nations shall learn war no more.

But some will admit that the Gospel is to be preached to all nations, which will be at God's own good time. Now let us inquire when that "good time" is? To-morrow? No. For God says "boast not thyself of to-morrow," for thou knowest not what a day will bring about. Then now is the time, says God, we have no promise of to-morrow, now is the time for us to lay our shoulder to the Gospel wheel, and roll it on to earth's remotest bounds. Or will you be at ease in Zion, and slumber while the Savior pleads for a sinking world?

Universal nature, as well as the Word of God, has pronounced a woe upon them that are at ease in Zion. If then brethren, you would fill the design of your holy mission, O! if you would share in the bliss and triumph of the Redeemed in Heaven, whose employments and exercises are full of action, you must throw your whole energy into the mighty work before you. Let one simultaneous onset be made upon the territory of sin, renewing the attack day by day, and press on with unfaltering ranks until the bread of life, the Bible faithfully translated; is carried to the millions of earth, and the blessed Gospel is extended through the borders of our own land, and to the uttermost limits of the habitable globe.

Behold these two gigantic enterprises of the church! The Bible and the Missionary Cause! Going forth in their peerless majesty, linked hand in hand, to regenerate and exalt to God a ruined race, now in their struggle at the threshold of infidelity! They turn to you for sympathy and help. Shall they look in vain and be disappointed? Let the universal response be, No—no. Can you say in the magnanimity of your souls, God being our helper, we are able for the task of doing our share of spreading the Gospel to the ends of the world! If so, shrink not dear brethren, beneath this stupendous atlas. God is your strength, therefore, with a faith and heroism that knows no surrender, nerve your mind for the giant

effort. And let the magnificent glory that shall crown your victory, give immortal strength to your broad shoulders to sustain the mighty load.

Already the sound of victory is coming in loud swelling notes over the din of the battle field. The shouts of your brethren in foreign lands are heard rolling across the mighty waters. Will you then, not help to push on the triumphs until our united hosts shall be seen coming up from the wilderness, shining as the morning, "fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners?" Then the redeemed millions of justified spirits and angelic armies will rejoice to behold those triumphs in a glorious eternity; then the throng of the redeemed and shining legions of angels will join the shoutings of universal triumph,—saying: blessing and honor, and power and glory, unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb forever and ever. Amen!

Joseph Suttle

October 29th, 1855

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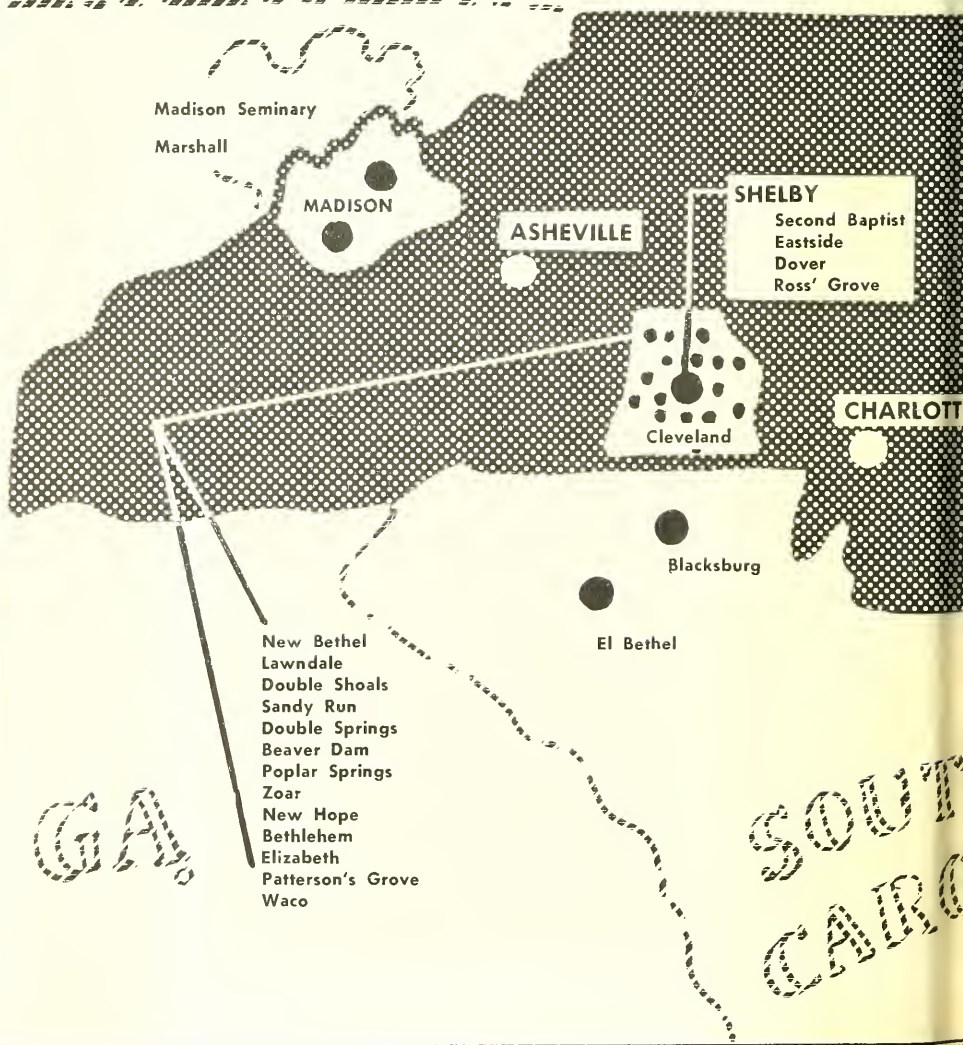
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